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**Designing experience of place for tourists:**  
**A case study of Chinese tour groups' visits to**  
**Lake Tekapo**

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A Dissertation  
submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Landscape Architecture

at  
Lincoln University  
by  
Yuanjie Ge

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Lincoln University  
2018

Abstract of a Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
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Designing experience of place for tourists:  
a case study of Chinese tour groups' visits to  
Lake Tekapo

by  
Yuanjie Ge

As China is becoming the second largest tourist market for New Zealand, there is a major opportunity for local areas to enhance the experience of Chinese visitors. Due to different cultural backgrounds, there are challenges for the locals to develop the village in ways that appeal to these tourists. Using Lake Tekapo as a case study, I have focused on the design of enriching experiences in order to enhance the sense of place for tourists and increase the local attractiveness. For the purpose of achieving a balance between the development of tourism and retaining local character, I explored the theory of sense of place, phenomenology, and tourist behaviours, and two case studies, along with developing a toolbox. Through analysing the lakefront concept plan, I designed four potential locations in Lake Tekapo based on sensory experience. I propose that the five senses are important keys for designing experiences, and a good balance of sensory experiences enhance the ways in which a location is perceived.

**Keywords:** sense of place, experience, Lake Tekapo, Chinese tourism, landscape architecture

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

China is becoming the second largest tourist market for New Zealand. The number of visitors from China is growing rapidly, and is predicted to exceed 900,000 annually by 2023 (China Market, 26 September, 2016). The huge number of visitors will be a chance to improve economic development through tourism and also a challenge for the local landscape.

My specific focus is on Lake Tekapo, which, according to my preliminary survey of four Chinese travel agencies (two in Auckland and two in Christchurch), is a popular and significant short-term stopping point for Chinese group tours to New Zealand. As a busy tourist town, there are considerable challenges to keep its local uniqueness and offer positive experiences for people from diverse cultures. The design and planning for Lake Tekapo is a crucial part of this process of development. As Chinese visitors have a very different cultural background to New Zealanders, it is necessary to explore the way that they experience a place. My research question is: How can Lake Tekapo show its uniqueness and attraction while at the same time maximising experiences for Chinese visitors? Where is the balance point and how can we use design to achieve it?

I will explore the theory related to my question in chapter 1. In addition, through exploring the method of how to design experiences for Lake Tekapo, a tourism destination, I will develop a design toolkit in chapter 2 that can be applied to other tourist towns. Through having critiqued various methods and plans, it will be possible to develop guidelines in relation to designing for sense of place in Lake Tekapo.

### 1.1 Methods

#### 1.1.1 Literature review

In this paper, I will start with the Literature review (see section 1.2). As my research is focusing on the designing experience of place for tourists, I will explore the Literature related to sense

of place, phenomenology, and experience of place for tourism and tourist behaviour. Through exploring those aspects of literature, I believe I will have a constructed concept of how to achieve my goal and what can be used in the design and why these would work. That literature would also broaden my range of knowledge that offers me some innovative thinking.

### **1.1.2 Case studies**

I will then explore some worldwide case studies (see chapter 2). Francis (2001) identified that case study method is an important part of landscape architecture research which can not only analyse the research and practice effectively but also collect and test new knowledge. Through the use of case studies, I will learn some practical design approaches which I could use in my own design. The case studies also offer the opportunity for me to link the knowledge from the literature to the practice so that I would know how to the knowledge can be applied, and whether it would work or not in the different design contexts.

### **1.1.3 Design critique**

As I selected Lake Tekapo as my research location, I will evaluate the proposed lakefront concept plan from the perspective of short-stay tourists (see section 3.2). In this part, I will critique the content from the lakefront concept plan which is related to experience design, and I will explore and enhance the effectiveness of those proposals combined with my case studies.

### **1.1.4 Design-directed research**

In this section is where design is used as a way of exploring and probing possible experiences for the area (see chapter 4). I intend to use the five senses as my design basis and explore experience designs for selected locations in Lake Tekapo.

## 1.2 Literature Review

### 1.2.1 Sense of place

The main focus of this research is on potential of the design in relation to experience of place. As Relph (1997, p. 208) observed sense of place is "an integral part of all our environmental experience". Sense of place is a faculty and a skill that connects humans to the world.

Relph (1976) (cited in Deming & Swaffield, 2011, p.66) described that "place is a location where biophysical features, human activities, and social and cultural meaning and values combine to create a distinct identity." Sense of place is considered as an approach that focuses on people's perceptions of the environment. Jorgensen and Stedman (2001, p. 233) also agree that sense of place is the most general concept that describes "the relationship between people and spatial settings". They also stated that the sense of place can be seen as "an attitude framework" which contains the concept of place "attachment, identity and dependence". Each of these concepts also shares the similar attitude with "affective, cognitive and conative" respectively.

Place attachment is the term that is seen as one of the core concepts that describes the connection between people and place. Tuan (1977) considered that people usually tend to attach to the place where they can have strong emotional experiences. These kinds of feelings are essential elements in forming the concept of home. Hernández, Hidalgo, Salazar-Laplace, and Hess (2007) explained this idea further and indicated that the home is a concept that can have different scales and functions: "the house, the neighbourhood, the city, the communities, and rural places" all can work as the place to connect with people's affection. Although Tuan (cited in McAndrew, 1998) pointed out that the home-like feeling, as in the term rootedness, is a result of inhabiting one location for a long period. But Hay (1998) discovered that tourists can also have a sense of place, by generating affection for the beauty of destination characteristics during a short visit. People's relationship with the environment will influence their sense of place, while a strong sense of place will also affect people's attitude and emotional reaction to the place. Kianicka, Buchecker, Hunziker, and Müller-Böker (2006) found in a case study that the local landscape character contributes to the construction of the locals' and tourists' sense of place. This is important for Lake Tekapo, as tourism in the area is nature-based, so the landscape character is a critical part of this.

Emphasising local landscape character is therefore important for increasing people's affective connection to the place. It can also enhance people's place attachment, and encourage return visits to the location.

### **1.2.2 Phenomenology**

In the literature of sense of place, many authors described how sense of place is formed and developed by personal experience (Adams, 2013; Relph, 1976; Russ, Peters, E. Krasny, & Stedman, 2015). In order to understand experiences, it is useful to refer to the field of phenomenology, because phenomenology is a study of experience (Aravot, 2010, p. 6).

Wylie (2005, pp. 235, 238-239) used to describe his expeditions in a phenomenological way, using the words which describe experiences, such as "immerse, nerves, intimacy, and tense", to express his understanding of landscape. McCann (2008, pp. 268-269) wrote of phenomenology as having "embodied the experience of space". She believed that we should not only use our eyes but our whole body to sense the world. We should not set a boundary between ourselves and the world, we need to push ourselves beyond the body and being in the world. McCann says we should sense our surrounding world and form a "carnal echo", which is the experience of how we communicate with the world and embody the space. Bachelard (1994) also uses poetic phenomenological language to describe the different senses and elements that relate to experience. He said the smell is the sense that recalls his memory (p. 88); he uses the 'inside' and 'outside' feeling to describe the boundary of being or not being in the world (p. 216). He also uses poetic ideas such as 'the home', and 'the nest' to express safe feelings (p. 91).

In a phenomenological way, people need to use their whole body to dissolve the physical boundary, to sense the world and to embody the world through their own experience and feelings. As a designer, it is important to support people and offer them the opportunity to have these kinds of phenomenological experience. Through enriching their experience, we can increase their sense of place.



### **1.2.3 Experience of place for tourism**

Tuan (1977, p. 10) observed that experience is a combination of feeling and thought. Space is sensed by feelings and the place is defined by thought. The definition and meaning of a space can transfer it to a place. Experience can connect space to place, and can work as an approach that helps us to frame the space to a meaningful place for visitors by designing to meet certain expectations. Therefore, understanding the 'thought' of visitors is essential for a tourism space to create a sense of place.

Hong, Huang, and Yu (2009, p. 1276) indicated that “sense of place in tourism attractions focus on place identity and place dependence”. Place identity develops from visitors' perceptions, and place dependence stems from the experiences of functional elements of the place. They also observed that “the diversity of cultural background of the tourist place” is the most significant factor of sense of place of tourism attractions. This emphasises the importance of cultural background for the ways that tourists perceive and experience the place.

Xie, Chang, Zhu, and Chen (2014) explored a case study of a popular historic conservation area in Guangzhou and found that Chinese visitors’ experience of sense of place varies according to their age range, educational attainments, the familiarity of place, travel distance, and the length of stay. Those elements may influence the Chinese tourists’ experience and perceptions of the place. But I am not exploring this aspect to this level of details because of the limited scope of my study.

### **1.2.4 Tourist behaviour**

Pizam, Jansen-Verbeke, and Steel (1997) found that difference in nationality does have an influence on tourists’ behaviour. As Chinese culture differs from New Zealanders’ culture, it is important to consider their behaviours when they travel to western countries. Pearce, Wu, and Osmond (2013) found that Chinese tourists usually travel in groups or use package tours. They also indicated that food experience is the most attractive and strong experience for Chinese tourists. Chang, Kivela, and Mak (2010) share a similar opinion and explored how Chinese people also use food experience as a way to learn the local culture, especially when the country is new to them. Furthermore, due to the pollution problems in China, natural and clean landscapes and environments are other elements that Chinese tourists appreciated.

Chinese tourists' behaviour is easily influenced and limited by group tours. Also, they may give priority to food and natural environment when they perceive and experience a place.

This review of the literature establishes some useful concepts to apply to my Lake Tekapo case study. Through interpreting experiences in a phenomenological way, I also have a deeper understanding of experiences which will benefit my design thinking. I will also keep the cultural differences between Chinese and New Zealanders, and Chinese tourists' preferences in mind, as there are factors that will influence my design in Tekapo. It is important for me to use these theories in my design, but I feel there is a gap between theory and practice. Therefore, I will explore some practical case studies that reveal more about connecting theory into the experience design in Lake Tekapo in the following chapter.

.

# Chapter 2

## Case Studies of Experiential Landscapes

In this chapter, I explore examples of destination-oriented and route-oriented tourist sites. These sites range from point-based location to extensive linear experiences. Drawing on these sites, I also developed a toolbox of experience-oriented elements. The toolbox provides various practical approaches that support the enhancing of different experiences. The case studies are analysed to build the toolkit for designing experience.

### 2.1 Destination oriented

#### Therme Vals, Vals, Switzerland



**Figure 2-1 Location of the Therme Vals (base map from ArcGIS)**

**Source: Esri, 2017 (©2017 Esri)**

Therme Vals is a combination of hotel and spa in Vals, an alpine valley in Switzerland (Figure 2-1). It was designed by Peter Zumthor and completed in 1996 (ArchDaily, 2009). Therme Vals was built on the only thermal spring in the Graubunden Canton and was constructed with cave-like structures, under a grass roof, and half buried in the hill (Figure 2-2)(Martin, 2014). The whole building looks like an extension of the space of the surrounding hill. It is immersed in its local landscape and in nature. The designer intended to create a space in which people

can enjoy the benefits of the experience of an ancient bath (ArchDaily, 2009). Therefore, there are different sensory experiences provided within the site.



**Figure 2-2 Therme Vals and the surroundings (Photo: Mariano Mantel)**  
**Source: Mantel, 2014 (Used under CC BY-NC 2.0)**

One of the main materials used in the construction of Vals was the local quarried Valser Quartzite slabs (Martin, 2014). The use of these layered local stones creates a certain depth in the space due to its series of different grey colours (Figure 2-3). Compared with other materials used inside the Vals, such as the smooth terrazzo (Frearson, 2016), people can sense different spaces by touching those different textures.

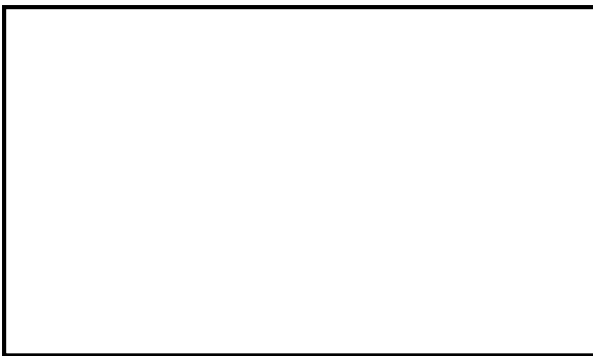
As the designer aimed to build a cave-like space, part of the inside of the building feels dark. Zumthor used different lights to create brightness and darkness which form diverse experiences (Figure 2-4). The orientation of the large windows shapes the space and offers a better view. The small windows provide weak light which can heal people's body and nerves. The shadow stresses the bright space and also immerses people in the bathing experience.



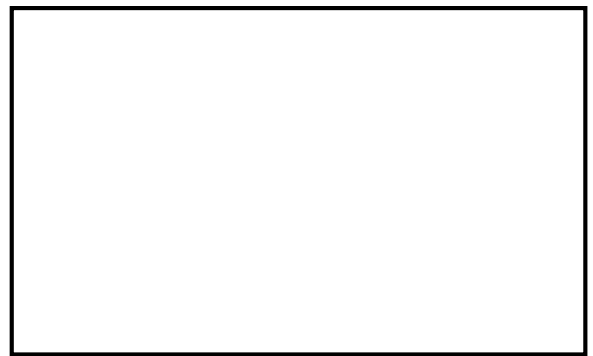
**Figure 2-3 Vals Stones on walls**  
**(Photo: Henry Plummer)**  
**Source: Schielke, 2015**



**Figure 2-4 Different uses of lights**  
**Source: 7132 Therme Gallery**



**Figure 2-5 Outdoor pool in winter**  
**(Photo: Fernando Guerra)**  
**Source: Souza, 2016**



**Figure 2-6 Mist in the bath**  
**(Photo: Fernando Guerra)**  
**Source: Souza, 2016**

The water temperature is not the same throughout the Vals complex. There are cold baths and hot baths, inside and outside springs, all of which provide different temperature experiences for people (Martin, 2014). The outside hot bath creates a particular contrast to the cold weather, which makes it so valued as an experience (Figure 2-5).

Due to the cave-like building, the bubbling of the water may create an echo in the space. That adds to the experience of the site, adding the sense of hearing, including the sound of water touching the stone, as well as other sensory experience like the mist created by hot water (Figure 2-6), making a fantasyland that people can truly immerse themselves in.

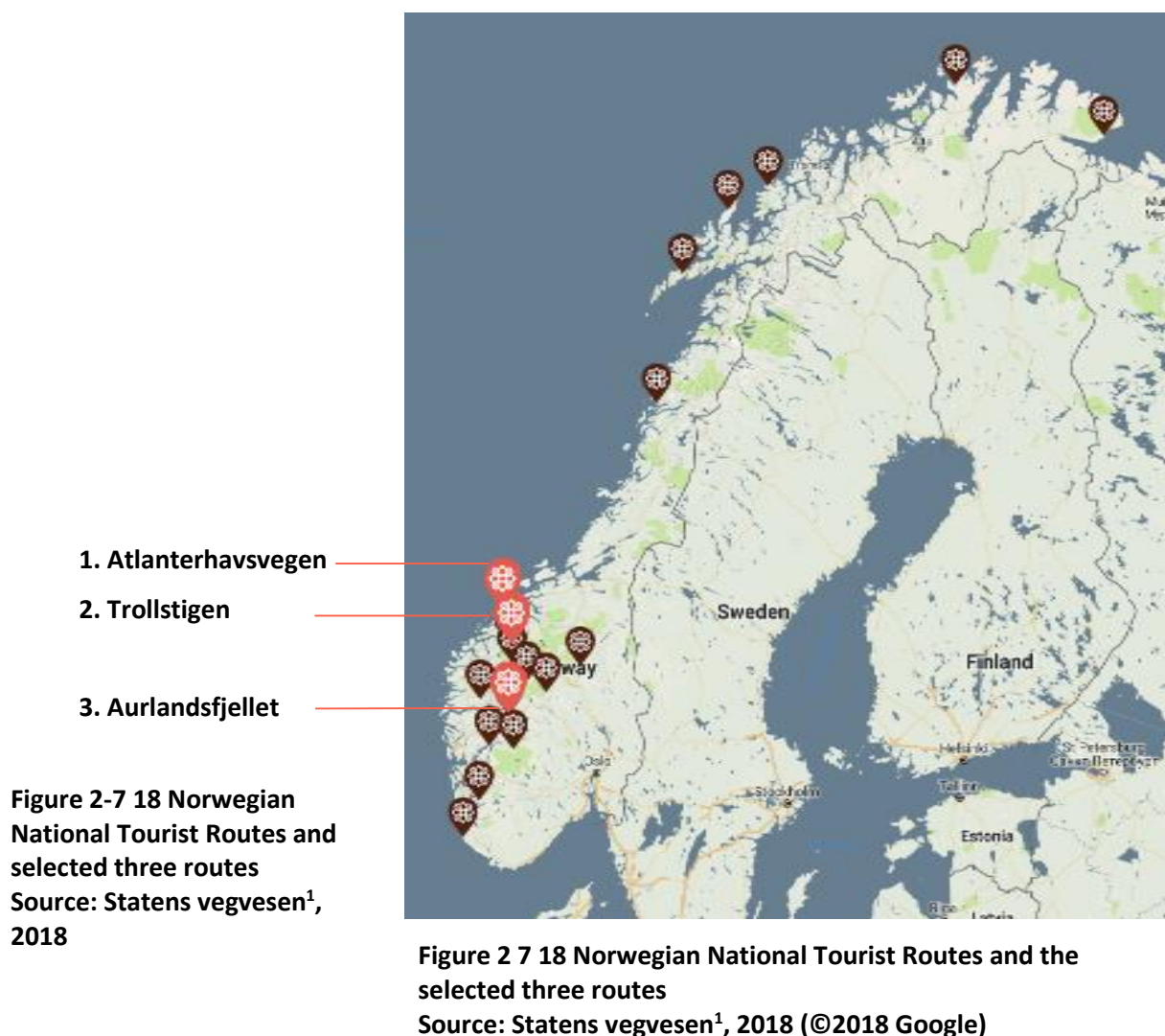
At the Therme Vals, the designer used water, stone, light, shadow, hot, cold, smoothness, and roughness to create visual, sound, touch, and smell experiences for people. The rich experiences are combined and mixed together, creating a symphony of harmony. These experiences make people feel the time is going so slowly, and when they have to leave, they

may feel the time goes so fast. This design creates an atmosphere where people want to stay longer.

## 2.2 Route oriented

### National Tourist Routes in Norway

In Norway, many talented designers combined their efforts into the local landscape, and developed 18 scenic routes (Figure 2-7)(Innovation Norway, n.d.). Those routes combine "Norwegian nature, architecture and design" which can offer visitors amazing experiences and let them know more about Norway (Innovation Norway, n.d.). I selected three routes to analyse their features (Figure 2-7).



<sup>1</sup> Statens vegvesen: Norwegian for Norwegian Public Roads Administration (NPRA)

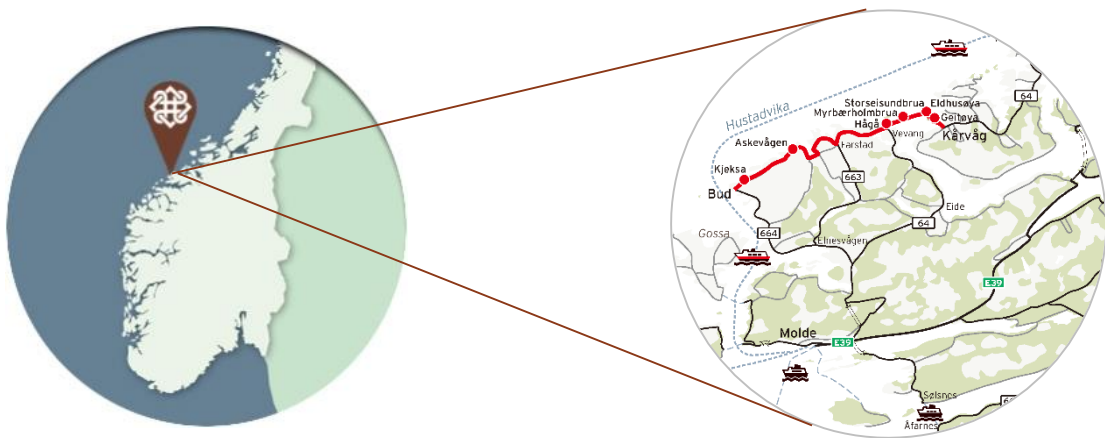


## 2.2.1 Atlanterhavsvegen



**Figure 2-8 View of the Atlanterhavsvegen (Photo: Roger Ellingsen)**

Source: Statens vegvesen, 2010 (©2010 Foto: Roger Ellingsen / Statens vegvesen)



**Figure 2-9 Location and route of Atlanterhavsvegen**

Source: Statens vegvesen, n.d.-a (Used under CC BY 4.0)

This route is praised as one of the world's most beautiful drives (Bremner & Shadbolt, 2017)(Figure 2-8). It was constructed to connect the town on the mainland with several small islands and bridges (Figure 2-9) (Statens vegvesen, n.d.-a). The route follows the landscape of those islands, so when driving through the route, people can actually feel the landscape in a physical way. The road is like the waves of the ocean which is unpredictable and impressive. In addition, as it is a route over the ocean, the weather can emphasize nature and change the

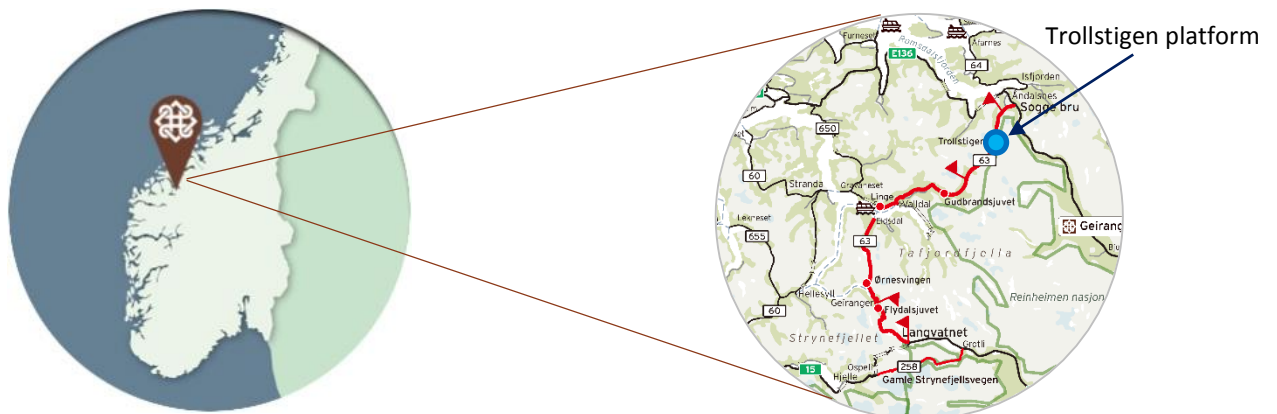
experience on the route. On a sunny day, people may enjoy the beauty of nature, and on a raining or windy day, people can experience the strong power of nature.

Besides the driving road, there are also hiking routes along the route for people to have a close experience of the ocean, and fishing spots that related to the fisheries history of this area.

## 2.2.2 Trollstigen



**Figure 2-10 View from the Trollstigen platform (Photo: Jarle Wæhler)**  
Source: Statens vegvesen, 2012 (©2012 Foto: Jarle Wæhler / Statens vegvesen)



**Figure 2-11 Location and route of Geiranger – Trollstigen**  
Source: Statens vegvesen, n.d.-c (Used under CC BY 4.0)

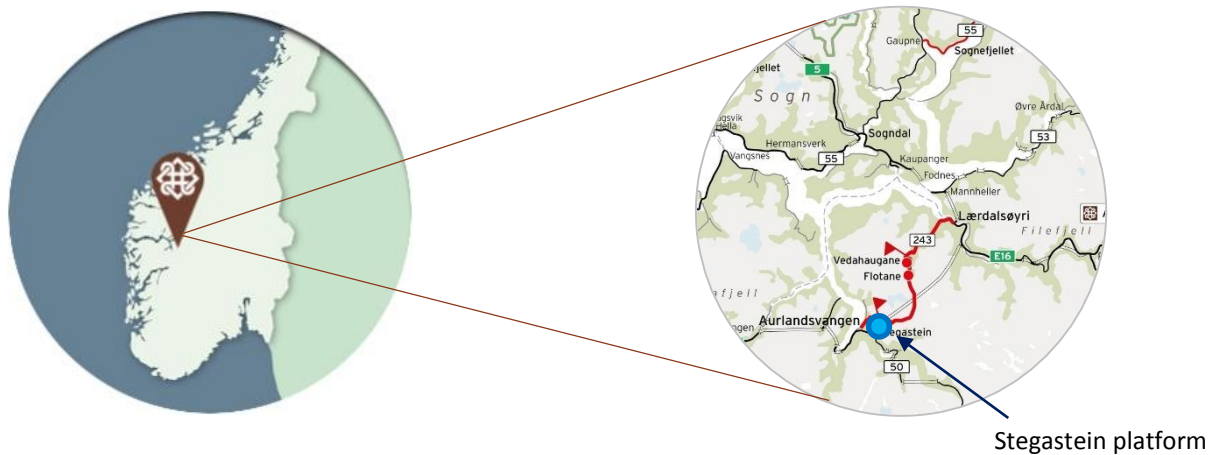


The first route I studied is a journey to experience the ocean, and this route is to experience the mountain. This road is famous for its large number of hairpin bends (Figure 2-10 & Figure 2-11) (Nikel, n.d.; Statens vegvesen, n.d.-c). Driving on this route is truly a way to test people's driving skills and they need to be highly focused mentally. They may feel intense and fear when they are driving on the road up to the mountain, but the happiness can be emphasised when drivers successfully reach the end of the route. The viewing platform uses metal and concrete materials, with the angled shape as a contrast to the snake-shaped route up the mountain. The contrast emphasises the character of the natural surroundings. And the glass rails provide better views for people to enjoy the hard-driving road they have conquered. The contrast feeling of intense and relax offers people an amazing experience.

### 2.2.3 Aurlandsfjellet



**Figure 2-12 View from the platform at Stegastein, Aurlandsfjellet (Photo: Per Kollstad)**  
**Source: Statens vegvesen, 2008 (©2008 Foto: Per Kollstad / Statens vegvesen)**



**Figure 2-13 Location and route of Aurlandsfjellet**  
**Source: Statens vegvesen, n.d.-b (Used under CC BY 4.0)**

This route is always covered by snow and only open for four months annually (Statens vegvesen, n.d.-b). But the most interesting experience it offers is the platform at Stegastein (Figure 2-12 & Figure 2-13). Unlike other high-level platforms, the most outstanding feature of this is that it has a curved extension in the vertical direction (Statens vegvesen, n.d.-d). When people stand at the edge of it, they can feel they are truly being driven into the landscape. Usually, this kind of platform has a blind spot, which is the place under people's feet. But the vertically curved design gets rid of this blind spot and offers a unique viewing perspective.

## 2.3 Strategy tool box

The first part of this chapter has explored two types of design, destination-oriented and route-oriented cases, using different approaches to design diverse experiences based on the specifically chosen spaces. These approaches could be most helpful in design processes where the site is selected first, and then the experiences are designed. In this case, the location is important than experience. On the other hand, as my aim is to design experiences in Tekapo, I also want to learn the elements that would create a certain experience, which means the experience is the focus, and these elements can be used in any location to achieve that experience. I, therefore, propose to focus on experiences of orientation, extension, immersion, the sublime and the picturesque which I believe have the potential to enhance the experience of Tekapo's landscape. The following examples are selecting to explore how different

elements can be used to enhance experiences. At the end of the chapter, I summarise these ideas as a toolbox and use it as a guide to design experiences in the next stage.

## 2.3.1 Orientation

### Solar-Powered LEDs & light

Glowing "Starry Night" Bike Path, Netherlands (Figure 2-14)



**Figure 2-14 Glowing "Starry Night" Bike Path**  
Source: Studio Roosegaarde, 2014  
(Used under CC BY-NC 2.0)

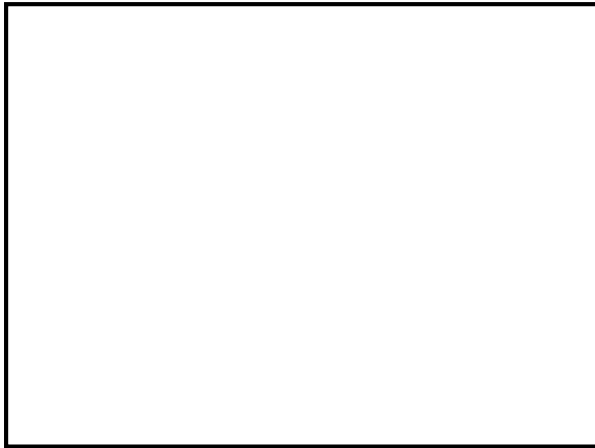


**Figure 2-15 Vincent Van Gogh's "The Starry Night"**  
Source: Wikipedia (In the public domain)

In this design, the designer uses the solar-powered LED lights and light-collecting paint to create an orientation way in the dark night (Howarth, 2014). Instead of using bright and large lights to make a consistent and smooth light effect, this design divides the light into small pieces. Just like Vincent Van Gogh's "The Starry Night"(Figure 2-15), which inspired the designer, the light on the path is like the oil painting, forming the lighting path by dots (Howarth, 2014). This method makes the light not too bright in the dark so that it does not overwhelm people's vision, and if some lights do not work, it will not affect the consistency of the whole path. The designer uses Van Gogh's painting to connect to Van Gogh's heritage home, which creates a sense of place that leads people to the final location. Because the starry night sky is especially important at Tekapo (which is a Dark Sky Reserve), this element would also be useful to apply in Lake Tekapo to reflect the feature of the starry sky, and also emphasise its experience without detracting from it with bright light.

## Colour

Restaurant 'Rayen Vegan', Spain



**Figure 2-16 Yellow colour stress light boundary at daytime (Photo: Susana Piquer)**

**Source: Arroyo, 2014**



**Figure 2-17 Similar lighting effect at night**

**Source: Bentum, 2015**

This design uses the yellow colour to emphasize the actual wall light boundary that would only appear at night (Figure 2-16 & Figure 2-17). It brings the night time experience to daytime, providing people with the experience they are not expecting to have during that time. It also uses the colour to stress the entrance of the restaurant and can lead people to focus their eyes on it. The colour also sets up a clear boundary between the restaurant and the rest of the buildings, create its own sense of place. Because Lake Tekapo is a small village, a colour element could be used on the road or buildings to create a boundary around the village area, and this could enhance the sense of entering the space for the visitors.

## 2.3.2 Extension

### Window

Manshausen Island Resort, Norway



**Figure 2-18 Resort on the water (Photo: Siggen Stinessen)**

**Source: ArchDaily, 2015**

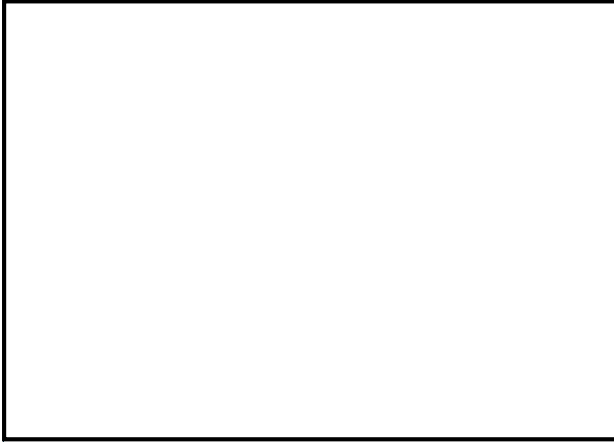


**Figure 2-19 View from inside of the resort  
Source: Manshausen**

Part of this resort is set on the water, and is equipped with floor-to-ceiling windows on three sides (Figure 2-18). The windows bring the sunlight into the room to a maximum degree. The transparent windows create a non-stop visual connection so that the outside space seems to be part of the resort (Figure 2-19). Using floor-to-ceiling windows is a way of blurring the boundary of the inside and outside which can enlarge the feeling of the inside space and enrich the inside experience for people. Lake Tekapo has the perfect location to provide a scenic lake view for visitors. This type of window could be used on both sides of the buildings in the town centre so that the visitors could enjoy the lake view from the highway and it may blur the spatial distance between the highway and the lake.

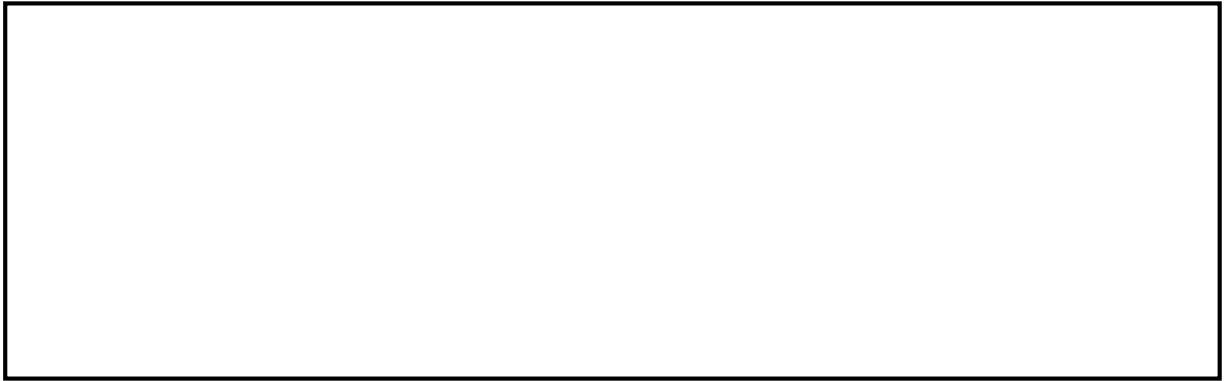
## Infinity edge

Infinity pool, Marina Bay Sand Hotel, Singapore



**Figure 2-20 Infinity pool**

**Source: the Marina Bay Sands Hotel**



**Figure 2-21 View from the Infinity pool**

**Source: the Marina Bay Sands Hotel**

This pool is 57 storeys above the ground (Figure 2-20)(the Marina Bay Sands Hotel, 2017). The combination of height and the infinity-edge design makes the view from the pool appear to have no boundary with the landscape beyond (Figure 2-21). If the window is bringing the outside into the inside to enlarge space, the infinity pool is the other way around. There is no inside or outside and no space needs to be enlarged. The pool is part of the space as far as the visual plane can extend, and when people go into the pool, they can feel that the world is within this space. This concept of a pool with no edge brings people into the world and allows them to experience the world as a vast, continuous space. There is a height difference between Tekapo town centre and the water surface. That may make the town centre a potential site to use the infinity edge elements design experience.



### 2.3.3 Immersion

#### Mirror

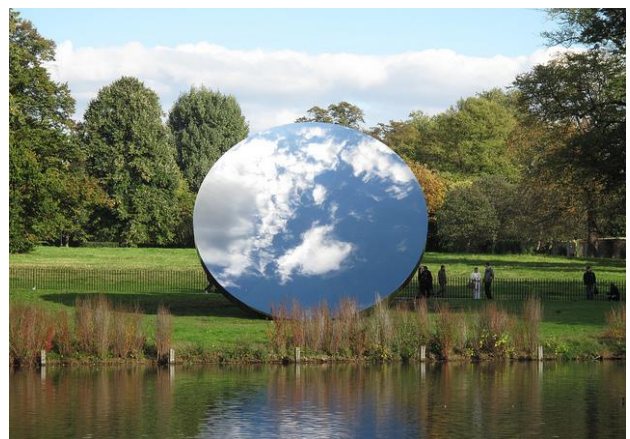
Mirrored house, Scotland



**Figure 2-22 Mirror house (Photo: Ekkehard Alteburger)**  
**Source: Altenburger, 1996 (©1996 Ekkehard Alteburger)**



**Figure 2-23 Mirror immerses people into surroundings (Photo: Laura Williams)**  
**Source: Williams, 2013**



**Figure 2-24 Mirror highlights the sky on landscape**  
**Source: Cumming, 2010 (Used under CC BY-NC 2.0)**

This house uses mirrors as materials that cover the outside and reflect the surroundings (Hosmer, 2012). At a glance, people may not notice the house, because of the reflection. It seems that the house itself is immersed in the place (Figure 2-22). The landscape reflected on the house combines the views from different directions on the surfaces of the house. This phenomenon disturbs people's perception of space and blurs the boundary between the man-

made house and the landscape. The reflection also disturbs people's visual connection to the place and create confusion over the boundary between themselves and nature. The mirror surface is, therefore, able to enhance their being in the world and experience of it. The mirror is an amazing material that can create totally opposite experiences through different designs. Through different angles, one mirror can immerse object into surroundings or highlight it from the surroundings (Figure 2-23 & Figure 2-24). The mirror could be a useful element to use in Lake Tekapo. A large mirror in front of the car park may hide it and create a view with the less built environment. Or a mirror on the ground may highlight the small flowers and animals which are out of visitors' eye levels.

## Water

### Lake Garden at Barbican Centre, London



**Figure 2-25 Lake Garden under water level**  
(Photo: Alan Murray-Rust)  
Source: Wikimedia Commons, 2008  
(Used under CC BY-SA 2.0)



**Figure 2-26 Gardens at ground level, Christchurch**  
(Photo: Author)

The lake garden at London's Barbican Centre is below the water level, with planting and seats within them (Figure 2-25). If the garden was built on the ground, it would just be an ordinary garden (Figure 2-26). However, by contrasting it with the water level, the garden is sunken into the water, and people become immersed in the water. Also, placing the garden into the water is a way of truly "pushing" people into the water and experiencing it physically. People can use their other senses to explore this unfamiliar position. They are able to have a different experience from a different angle. The contrast of 'outside water' and 'inside people' forms a sense of place for the garden. Lake Tekapo has excellent water quality, making it an ideal place

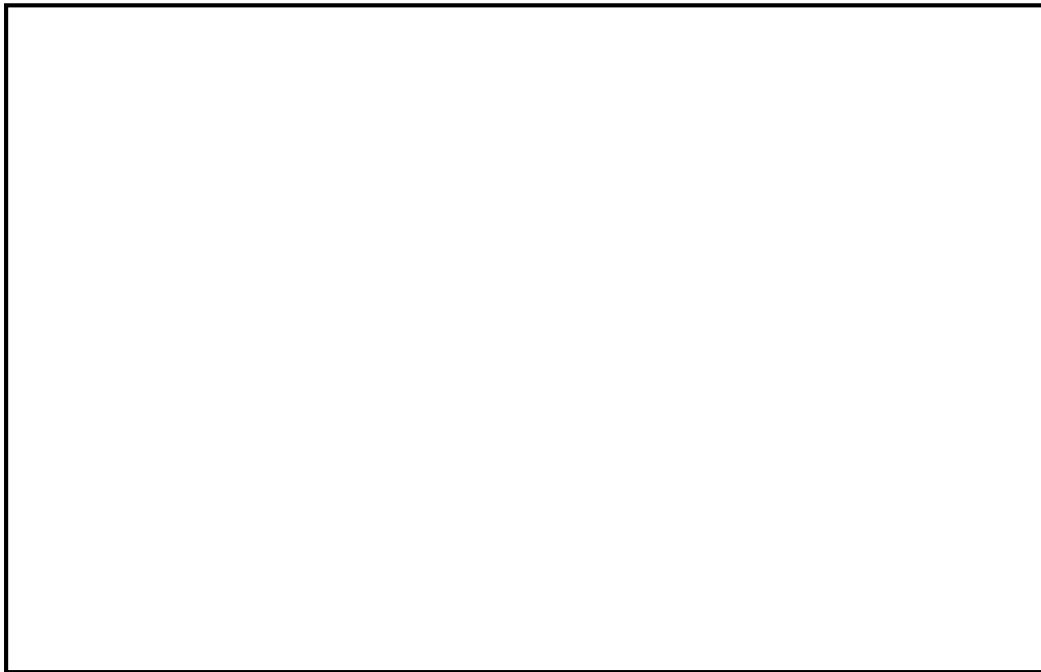


to include a water element. The foreshore of the lake could be a potential place to create an experience of immersion.

## 2.3.4 Sublime

### High level

The Pole House, the Great Ocean Road, Australia



**Figure 2-27 the Pole House**

**Source: Great Ocean Road Holidays**

The Pole House is up on a hill and supported only by a pole (Figure 2-27)(Radulova 2015). Its railing is all glass so that when people stand there and look outside, their line of sight will not be blocked. Because of this elevated location, the house seems to float on the water, creating a stunning experience. The designer uses the deep slope to build the house at a high level which forms a sublime experience for people. The height pushes the edge of the built environment beyond where people usually think it is. This design approach pushes people into nature, and lets them enhance their being in the world. As I mentioned before, there is a height difference between the Tekapo town centre and the water surface. Using this height advantage may create a feeling of awe for visitors. And Mt John, which is the best location to enjoy the full view of Lake Tekapo, may also be a potential site to use this element for design.

## Planting

Garden of Hummelo, Netherlands (Piet Oudolf)



**Figure 2-28 Garden of Hummelo**

**Source: Spencer, 2009 (Used under CC BY-NC 2.0)**

Piet Oudolf designed the mix of grasses and flowering perennials to show not only the seasonal change but different textures in the garden (Slatalla, 2016). The grass blurs the edge of the planting which can create a romantic experience in the sunlight and wind. Diverse plants are planted in a vast area with layers to form a sublime experience for people. The native plants at Tekapo are high country tussock (*About Lake Tekapo*, n.d.). The tussock has similar texture as the grass used in Figure 2-28, and it could provide similar romantic experience with other native plants in a setting of lake view. The tussock can also impress people, and show the native character to visitors.

## 2.3.5 Picturesque

### Frame

Koleston Billboards, Beirut, Lebanon



**Figure 2-29 Billboard consist of frame and sunlight in different times**  
**Source: De Bie, 2009 (Used under CC BY-ND 2.0)**

This billboard extends the concept of the readymade which was first introduced by Marcel Duchamp, who put a porcelain urinal in an art exhibition and called it 'Fountain' (Howarth & Mundy, 2015). Readymades involve choosing a readymade thing and putting it in a place that can give the thing a different meaning from its original one. This a method which encourages people to see familiar things from daily life from a different angle, and this may give it a totally different meaning. In this case, the billboard sets up a specific place for the sunlight (Figure 2-29). People are familiar with the beauty of sunlight, but the billboard makes the sunlight a colour for the hair dye. On the other hand, the solid billboard combines the colour of sunlight which makes it changeable from day to night. Nature's beauty is highlighted by the manmade thing, and the man-made thing gives a more living atmosphere from nature. Familiar things can offer diverse experiences for people, just by changing their positions. This method uses familiarity as an experience "finder", leading people into unfamiliarity which can enrich their

experience. People's experience sometimes is easy to attract by the thing that they are familiar with and overlook the thing they are unfamiliar. In Lake Tekapo, many visitors' experience is limited by what they have seen in advertisements, so that the classic postcard view restricts their imagination and they just see the destination through the view of the postcard. This method could help visitors to get into a different position to see the environment surrounding them. This can also enhance their communication with nature and enrich their experience.

In the toolbox, I summarise several design elements and classified them into different types of experiences (Figure 2-30).

Through analysing the two case studies, Therme Vals in Switzerland and the Norwegian Tourist Route, I explored methods of how to design experiences for specific places or routes. Through analysing these design elements, I explored how they create and enhance experiences in different ways. These two cases and the toolbox provide a set of design approaches that I will explore in my design experiments, after analysing the potential attractions, locations and the current lakefront concept plan of Lake Tekapo in the next chapter.





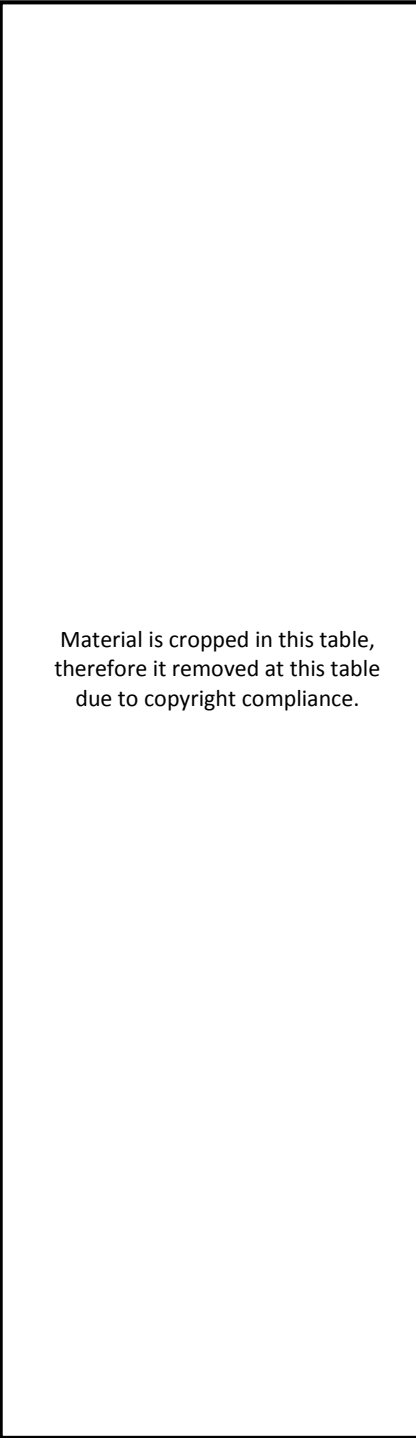

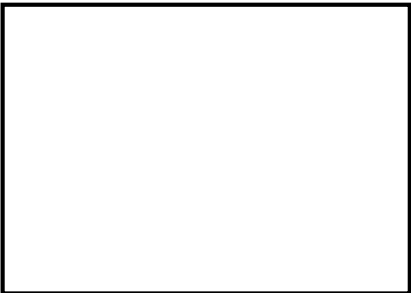


Orientation	Extension	Immersion	Sublime	Picturesque
Solar-Powered LEDs & light	Infinity edge	Mirror	High level	Frame
Glowing "Starry Night" Bike Path, Netherlands	Marina Bay Sand Hotel, Singapore	Mirror house, Scotland	the Pole House, Australia	Koleston Billboards, Lebanon
				 <p>Material is cropped in this table, therefore it removed at this table due to copyright compliance.</p>
Colour	Window	Water	Planting	
Restaurant 'Rayen Vegan', Spain	Manshausen Island Resort, Norway	Lake garden at Barbican Centre, London	Garden of Hummelo, Netherlands (Piet Oudolf)	
				

Figure 2-30 Toolbox of design elements for different types of experiences

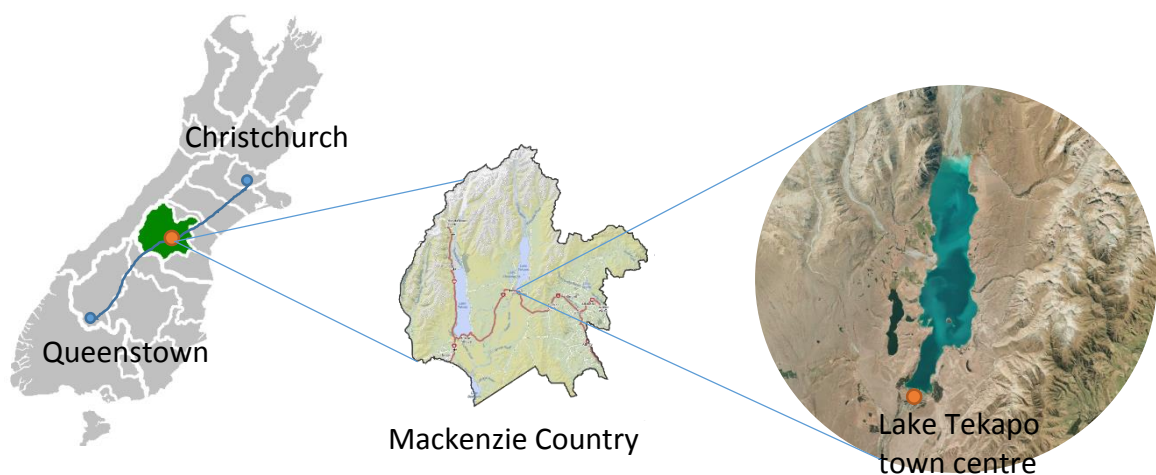


# Chapter 3

## Context: Lake Tekapo

### 3.1 Introduction

Lake Tekapo is an alpine lake that known for its turquoise lake water and scenic landscape, located at the centre of the Mackenzie Country of the South Island, New Zealand (Figure 3-1) (*Tekapo Tourism - Lake Tekapo*, n.d.). The town of Lake Tekapo used to be a small village surrounded by a vast tussock grass basin, but it grew quickly and became an important stopping point, because the town is located almost halfway between Christchurch and Queenstown, which is one of the most popular tourist routes in the South Island (*Lake Tekapo*, n.d.) (Figure 3-1). The town is also an accessible location to get to several ski fields, which makes it also a popular destination in winter (*Lake Tekapo*, n.d.). Moreover, because Lake Tekapo is part of the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve which was announced in 2012, Mt John Observatory which is close to the town centre became a famous place for visitors to view the starry night (*Mt John*, n.d.). In the town, the most popular stopping point for visitors is the Church of the Good Shepherd, which is the landmark of Lake Tekapo (*Lake Tekapo Village*, n.d.). It provides scenic views of the lake and surrounding landscape, which makes it the most popular picture on postcards.



**Figure 3-1 Location of Lake Tekapo**

**Source: Mackenzie District Council, 2014 (Base map ©Mackenzie District Council)**



**Figure 3-2 Attractions at Lake Tekapo**

**Source: Mackenzie District Council, 2014 (Base map ©Mackenzie District Council)**

Lake Tekapo has many attractions (Figure 3-2) reflecting not only its natural landscape but also human activities. Below I discuss key attractions that are influenced and formed by human activities

The first is the planting of lupins (Figure 3-3). Nowadays, the lupins have become a scenic landscape and a destination image in the eyes of tourists to Lake Tekapo, but the most distinguished flora character of the Mackenzie Country is the open grassland with tussocks (*About Lake Tekapo*, n.d.). In the 1950s, a local lady named Connie Scott planted the first lupins along the highway to Tekapo with the hope of beautifying the road (Wardle, 2016). Although lupins were considered to be an environmental weed to the native ecosystem by the Department of Conservation, they are supported by the local farmers as a good food source for high-country sheep farming. Because of the growing permission that the government has given to the farmers, Lupins seem to be unstoppable at the moment, and this is likely to continue (Wardle, 2016).



**Figure 3-3 Lupins at Lake Tekapo (Photo: Author)**

The second is the protection of night sky (Figure 3-4). In the 1960s, an observatory was built on Mt John. In order to protect night viewing from the observatory, the local council introduced an ordinance that restricted bright lights in town and no light is allowed to shine upwards into the sky at night (McCrone, 2015). Because of this ordinance and the limitation of land development in the village, Lake Tekapo forms a unique condition for observing the

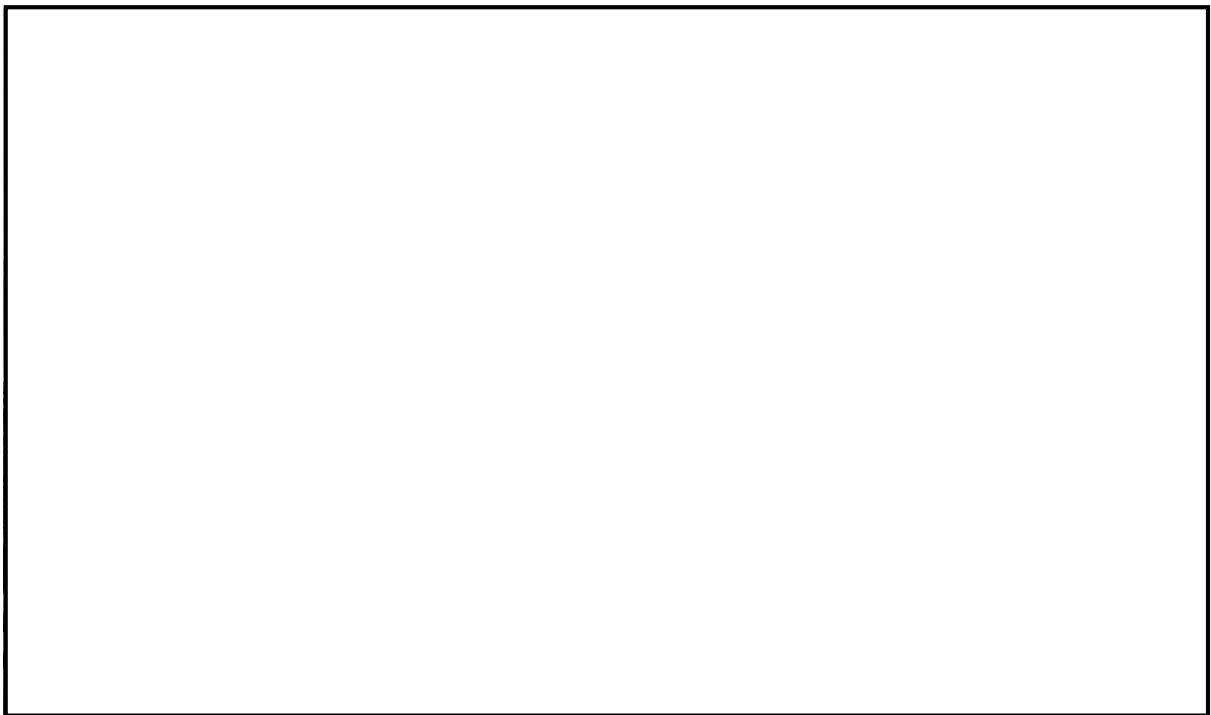


**Figure 3-4 Stargazing tour at Mt John**  
**Source: Everything New Zealand**



night sky. Therefore, in 2012, Lake Tekapo was recognised as an International Dark Sky Reserve(*Millions of Awe-Inspiring Stars*, n.d.).

The third is the construction of the Waitaki dam system. In the 1970s, a canal was built as part of the Waitaki hydro dam system which raised the lake level and supports the generation of almost half of the hydroelectric supply for the country (*Hydro generation in Lake Tekapo*, n.d.; Martin, 2010). Because Lake Tekapo was originally formed by the glaciers from the last ice age, the surrounding glaciers generated fine rock powder which not only gives the lake a turquoise colour but also brings nutrition to the water(*About Lake Tekapo*, n.d.; *The history of the Lake Tekapo area*, n.d.).This water contributes to the Tekapo canal, which is rich in oxygen and nutrition, and has a moderate temperature. Therefore, this man-made, constantly flowing river provides a high-quality living environment for salmon and trout (*New secrets of the Tekapo canal fishery*, 2015). As a result, it stimulated the development of alpine freshwater salmon farms (Figure 3-5).



**Figure 3-5 Salmon farms in the canal**  
**Source: Mount Cook Alpine Salmon**

Tekapo has a diverse basis for tourism, including the lupins along the road, the stargazing at night, the salmon farms, the scenic landscape, the iconic Church, hot springs, and high water quality. These attractions may benefit Tekapo’s future development but need careful consideration as part of developing the stable resource that contributes to the local economy.

An effective plan is needed to manage the future development of Lake Tekapo, to ensure it can be sustainable environmentally as well as economically.

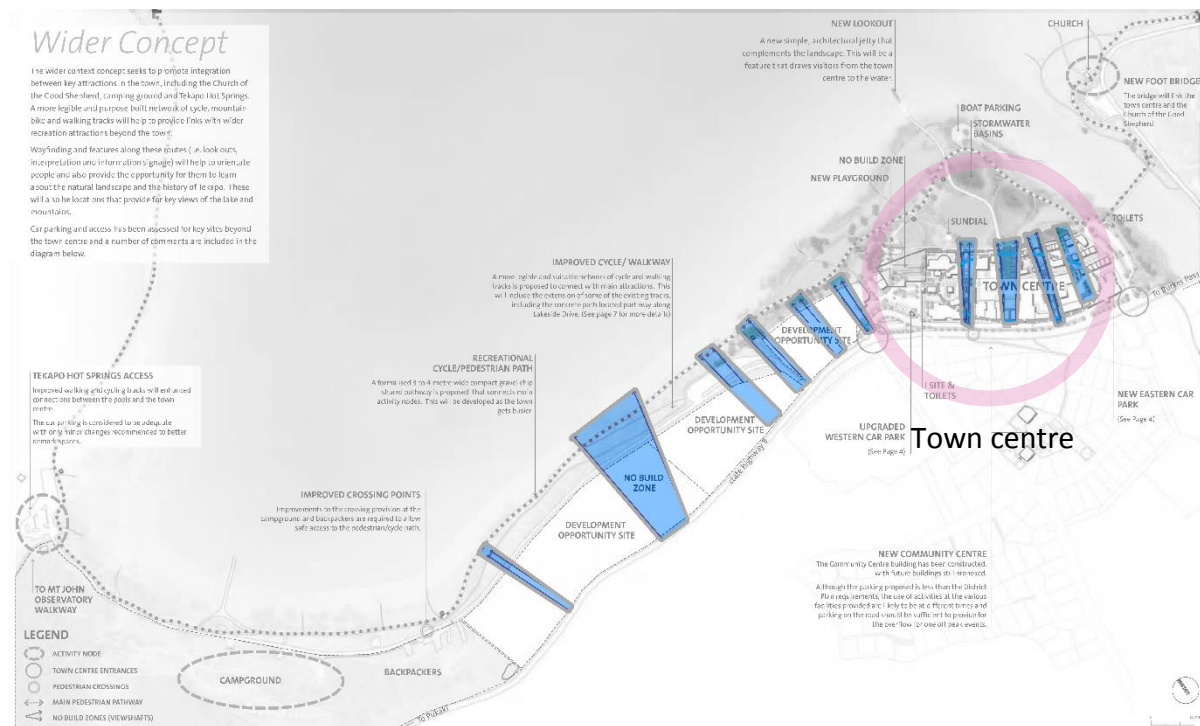
## **3.2 Lakefront development plan**

My first trip to Lake Tekapo was in 2014. I was impressed by the scenic views of the lake, water, mountaintops and the night stars. However, the planning and design of Tekapo were not that tourist friendly. Some road signs were not easy to find, and were ambiguous. I had to walk a detour to get to the church from the town centre because there was no bridge linking them directly. The key things that surprised me the most were most of the town centre's buildings had their backs facing the beautiful lake, and the vast empty grassland without development. The town centre appeared to be wasting its strongest advantage.

The Mackenzie District Council has also noticed these issues of the Tekapo town centre. In response to Lake Tekapo increasing attention from tourists, the Mackenzie District Council accepted and managed a lakefront concept plan for the new development of Tekapo town centre and lake edge area (*Tekapo Lakefront Development*, 2014). Besides the new facilities, parking area and retail, the plan also included some overall landscape planning which was aimed at offering abundant and unique experiences in presenting the natural features of Lake Tekapo to visitors.

There are several design strategies that relate to what can be called experience design and which would provide an important context for my design research. I, therefore, provide an overview of the plan and critique it from the perspective of my focus on short-visit tourists, particularly Chinese coach tourists.

### 3.2.1 Viewshaft

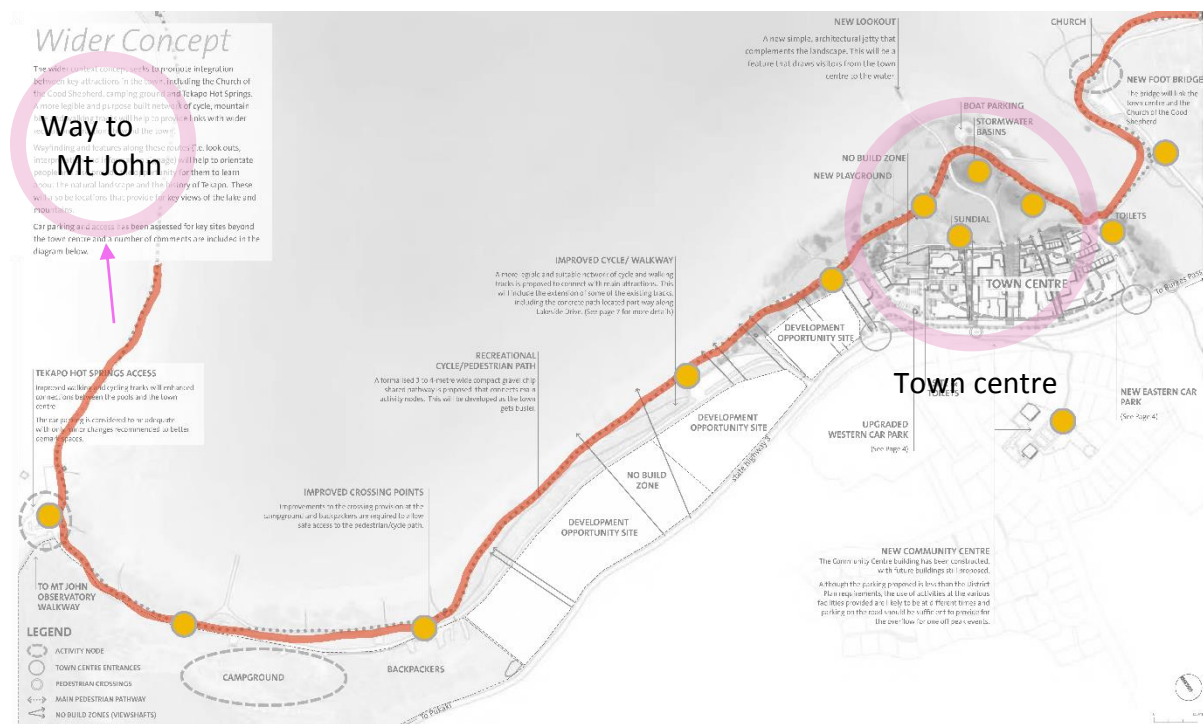


**Figure 3-6 Proposed Viewshafts in lakefront concept plan**

**Source: Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd (©2015 Mackenzie District Council)**

In the wider concept, the plan identified several areas to be kept free of buildings as Viewshafts (Figure 3-6) from the main highway towards the lake (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, pp. 11-12, 16). These Viewshaft spaces provide open views from the highway which can attract passing tourists and may encourage them to stay in Tekapo. Moreover, the plan also designs the viewshafts as activity spaces between buildings and these spaces are for pedestrians only (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, p. 16). They are the spaces that not only offer a varied experience for tourists, but also safer spaces which may encourage walking. Because Tekapo is a small village, encouraging more tourists to walk, means they can experience more activities in Tekapo. In addition, those spaces provide different exit options for walkers, allowing for easily stopping rather than feeling trapped on the path. This is a strategy that can benefit the short stay tourists. Because of the options to stop and start along the way, tourists can find their way out the path wherever they want. This is more attractive for short visit tourists, who may not want the pressure to have to walk the path without any choices. This can encourage the tourists who have limited time to walk, experience, and engage with the landscape.

## 3.2.2 Paths and Wayfinding



**Figure 3-7 Proposed main pathway and wayfinding points in lakefront concept plan**  
**Source: Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd (©2015 Mackenzie District Council)**

The main pathway in the concept plan (Figure 3-7) focuses on connecting the town centre, the Mt John observation walk track and the Church to form a legible network in the wider area of Tekapo (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, pp. 11, 15). The path connects the lakefront, so people can enjoy the range of scenery by walking the path. The wayfinding elements along the path are aimed at leading and encouraging people to walk and experience the wayfinding story (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, p. 15). According to the plan, those elements are designed around break points that divide the long walking path into relatively equal distances. This strategy can attract people to the path and help prevent boredom. The sculptural refuge, interpretation, seating and wayfinding devices are the elements suggested in the plan (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, p. 15). However, most of these elements only offer visual experiences. These elements that are indicated as being at human scale may not work at all, depending on angles of view, as they can be blocked by trees or buildings. Moreover, the premise that these elements will work is based on people choosing to walk on the path, and willing to walk for a long time. That premise may not work for the tourists who only have a short time to visit. For short visit tourists, it may be better to focus on elements of Tekapo character, or some elements which are interesting and interactive that would stimulate tourists to explore even in a short visit. It may be that a new



landmark for Tekapo can offer a diverse experience for tourists rather than only viewing and walking.

3.2.3 Jetty

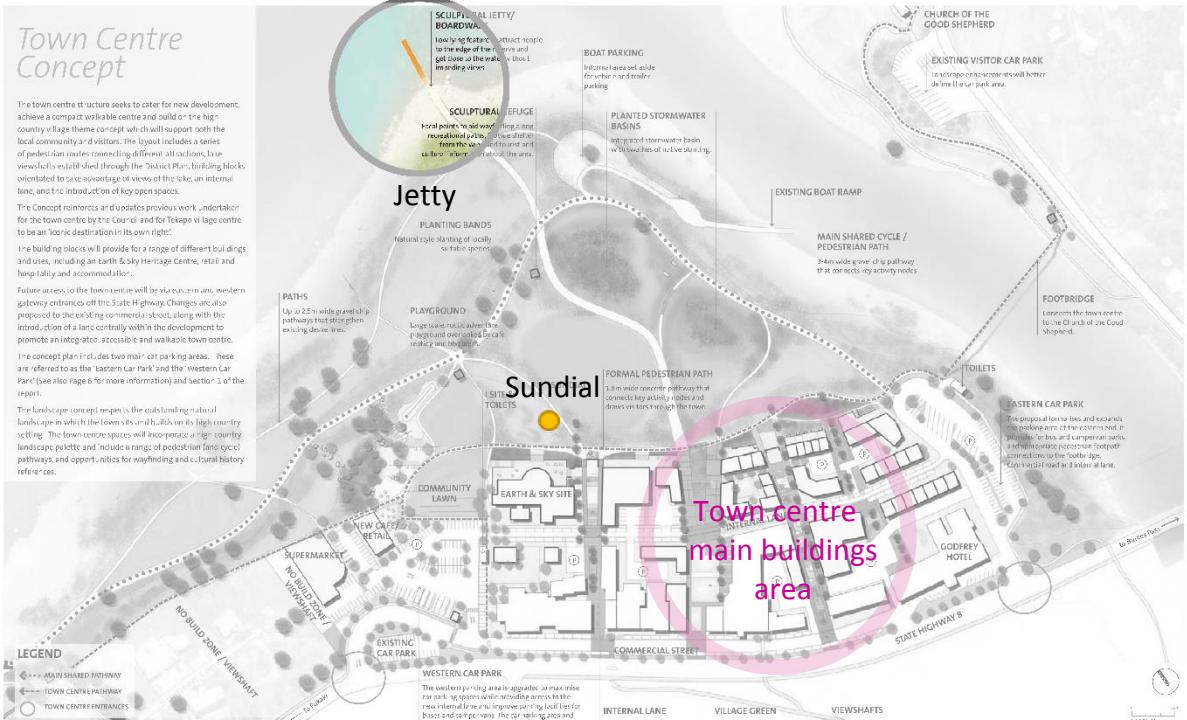


Figure 3-8 Proposed jetty in lakefront concept plan  
Source: Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd (©2015 Mackenzie District Council)



Figure 3-9 View from the sundial (Photo: Author)



**Figure 3-10 Topography to the north of town centre (Photomontage created by the author through various sources)**

In the concept plan, the jetty (Figure 3-8) was located at the new lookout place at the water edge in front of the town centre. It was described as a low-lying feature that could attract people but not block the view (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, pp. 11-12). The boardwalk of the jetty has a smooth surface that will encourage people to walk to the water's edge.

However, the proposal for the jetty is potentially compromised by the topography to the north of the town centre. This topography is characterised by a long slope with sharp steps (Figure 3-10). In the concept plan, more buildings will be built between the current buildings and the lake, and the building edge will be pushed forward to the position next to the existing sundial (Figure 3-8) (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, p. 4). But because of this slope, it will not be easy for people to see where the jetty is located, even if they are standing at the future edge of the built area of the town (Figure 3-9). Unless people choose to walk on the pedestrian path which would lead them to the lakeside, they may not be attracted by the jetty because it is not within their sight. Moreover, even with the supporting landscape and some facilities, the guiding path to the jetty is not a strong enough attractor for the tourists, especially the tourists who only intend to stay at short time and the tourists whose mind is already full of the iconic scenery of the Church of the Good Shepherd with the lupins. The footbridge and the Church are more outstanding and attractive for these tourists. But overall the jetty may not be successful for short stay tourist or new visitors because of the issues of visibility.



## 3.2.4 Planting: native plants



**Figure 3-11 Proposed main native planting in lakefront concept plan**

**Source: Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd) (©2015 Mackenzie District Council)**



**Figure 3-12 Native tussock grassland in Lake Tekapo (Photo: Author)**

The planting design (Figure 3-11) proposed in the lakefront concept plan has the potential to bring in more high country landscape character (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015,

pp. 12,17). These plants offer opportunities to present an impression of the Tekapo landscape to visitors, and let them know that besides lupins, which are not native to New Zealand, there are many native plants that form the local natural landscape. However, this experience is largely based on the visual qualities of plants, and the interpretation of the landscape often relies on language. For international visitors, such as the Chinese tour groups, it can be difficult for them to understand the significance of native vs exotic species. This is emphasised by my own experience as a tourist and a Chinese visitor. I was impressed by the form of native tussock (Figure 3-12), but the lupins have brighter and varying colours, which left a stronger image in my mind than the native plants. For the tourists who know nothing about Tekapo, the lupins seem to be a stronger competitor for a visual experience. How can we use design to reduce tourists' focus on lupins and direct their eyes to appreciate native plants?

### 3.2.5 Domain



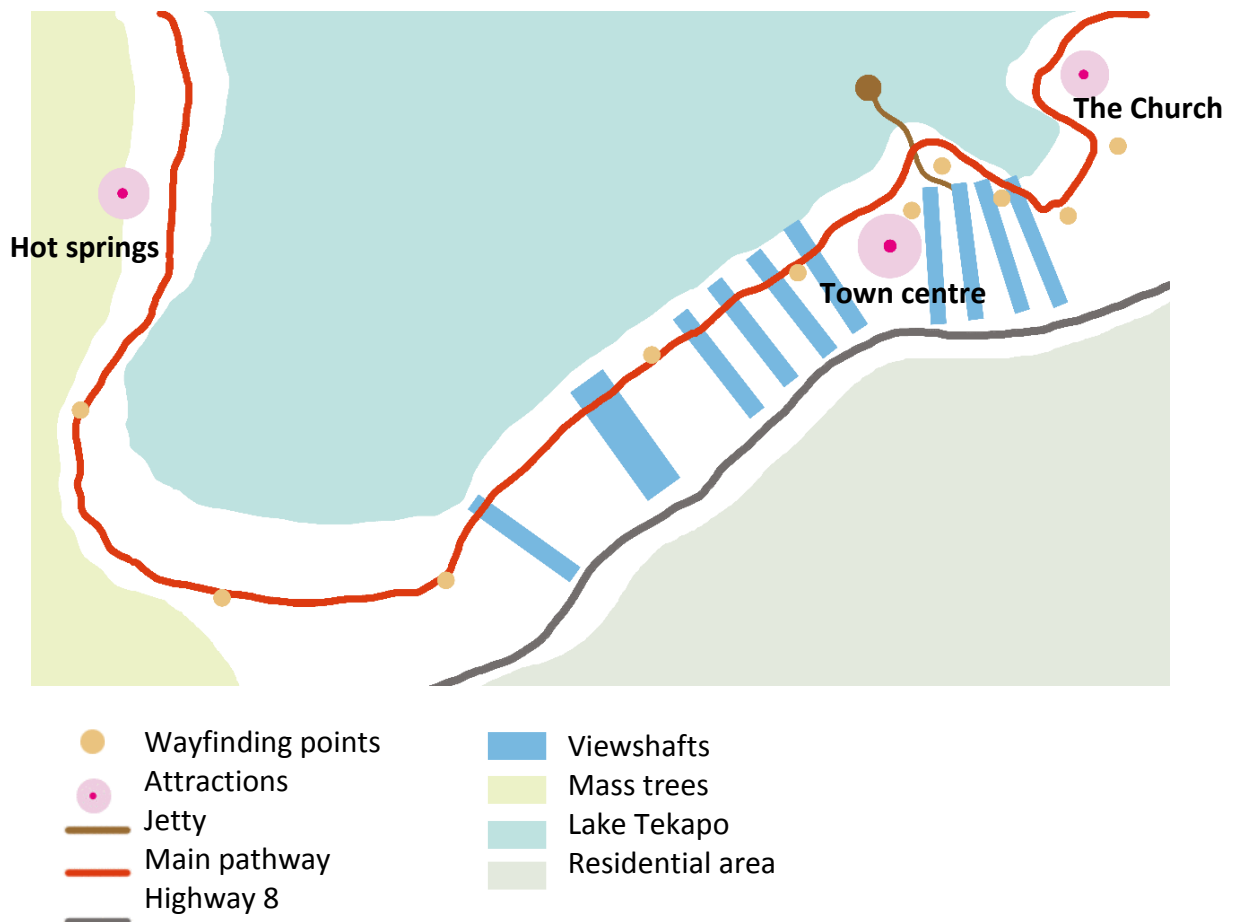
**Figure 3-13 Proposed domain in lakefront concept plan**

**Source: Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd) (©2015 Mackenzie District Council)**

The domain area (Figure 3-13) is located at the west park of the town centre which is aimed to be designed as a community lawn (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, p. 13). There will be several playground facilities on the lawn, with a designed landscape and BBQ area. People would have visual experience of the view, touch experience of playing with facilities,



sound experience from people who gather here, and smell and taste experience from the BBQ area. However, playing is really only designed for children, and the BBQ is more suitable for locals or visitors who are camping. Because it is designed for the community, even though people would have diverse experiences in the domain, these experiences may only be suitable for specific types of visitors to engage in. Tourists would experience the senses of sight, sound and smell. But these kind of experiences are not unique in Tekapo, people can have similar experiences in almost every community playground and the playground does not emphasise the sense of place. For the tourists, this domain may not be a good place to enrich their understanding, impression and experience of Tekapo.



**Figure 3-14 Summary of the proposed lakefront concept plan (summarized by author)**

The lakefront concept plan uses strategies of viewshafts, connected pathway, and wayfinding devices, as well as the proposed jetty, native planting and domain to enhance visitors' experiences in Lake Tekapo. I summarized those strategies into figure 3-14, which will be helpful for me to identify and develop the experience design in the next chapter. The 'experience design' aspects of the concept plan have their advantages and weaknesses, as I have highlighted. Because it is only a concept plan, there is not a great degree of detail. But

the case studies I have developed could be integrated into some of the planning indicated in the proposed lakefront concept plan. For example, the proposed jetty could be joined with the high-level experience to deal with its weakness of visibility or it could use its location advantage which is at the lakeside, and use the lake water developed with the intention of immersed experience which may offer a new experience to visitors. On the other hand, some elements I proposed in the toolbox may not fit well with the lakefront concept plan. Because Lake Tekapo is a small town, my focus on the design of experience will be based on walking, and within the bounds of my current project I won't have the opportunity to explore the experiences based on driving that were highlighted in my case studies. As part of my design-directed research, I will be exploring tools derived from international case studies deeper, with the intention of deepening and enriching visitors' experiences. According to the exploration of various case studies and the critique of the existing concept plan, I will establish some detailed design proposal in the following chapter.

# Chapter 4

## Tekapo Design Research

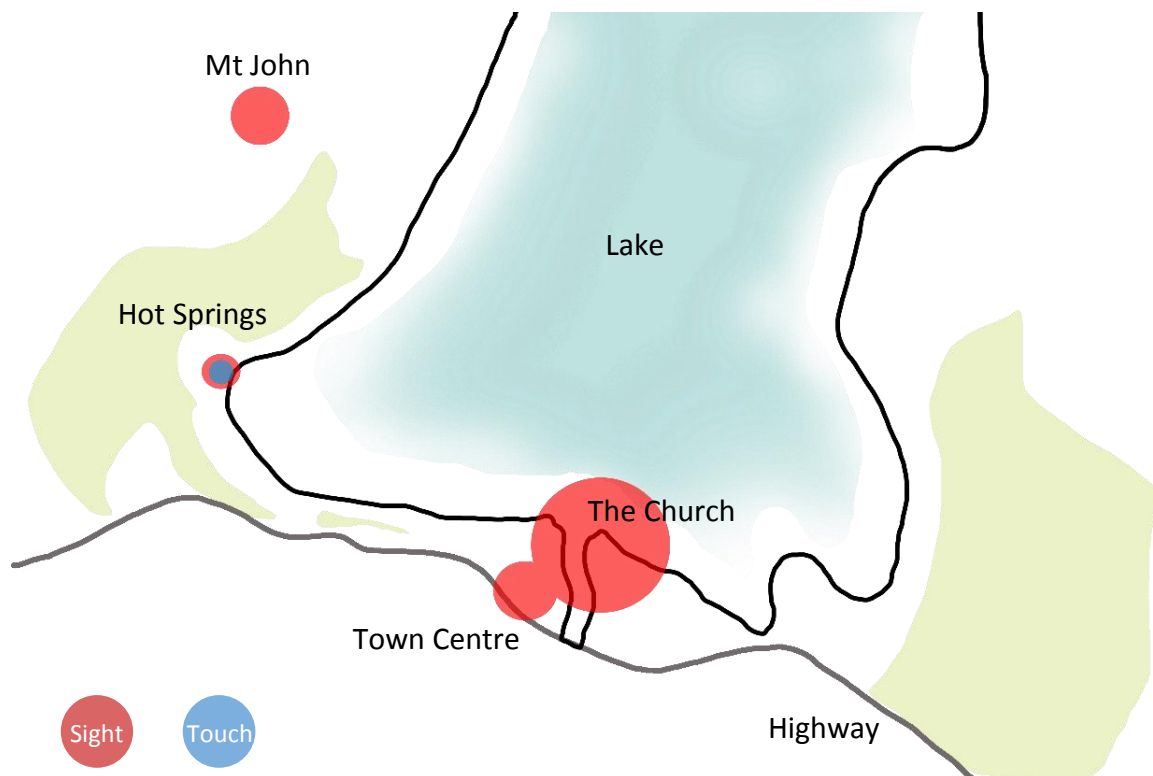
In approaching the design of Tekapo, my goal is to create various experiences which can enhance the connection and communication between people (tourists) and the landscape. In particular, I am focussing on tourists who only visit for a short time, such as Chinese tour groups. Experiences are the core of sense of place for Tekapo which will attract tourists and potentially increase the length of their visit. Developing the experience of place contributes to sustainability indirectly, and benefits Tekapo's future development.

I started my design by using the traditional five senses: sight, smell, sound, touch and taste (Figure 4-1). Through analysing different locations around Tekapo, I selected and combined senses with the specific target locations. Supporting by the toolbox of experiences (see Figure 2-30, chapter 2), and local elements, I developed design experiments for the town. At first, I envisaged the senses in a hierarchical way. But then I became aware that this privileged sight and sound overlook the influence of other senses. Sight and sound can attract people quickly, but smell, touch and taste can offer profound experience and are important for memory. My intention is therefore to develop an even balance of senses.



**Figure 4-1 Different colours I use to represent different senses in the following content**

## 4.1 Senses and experience analysis

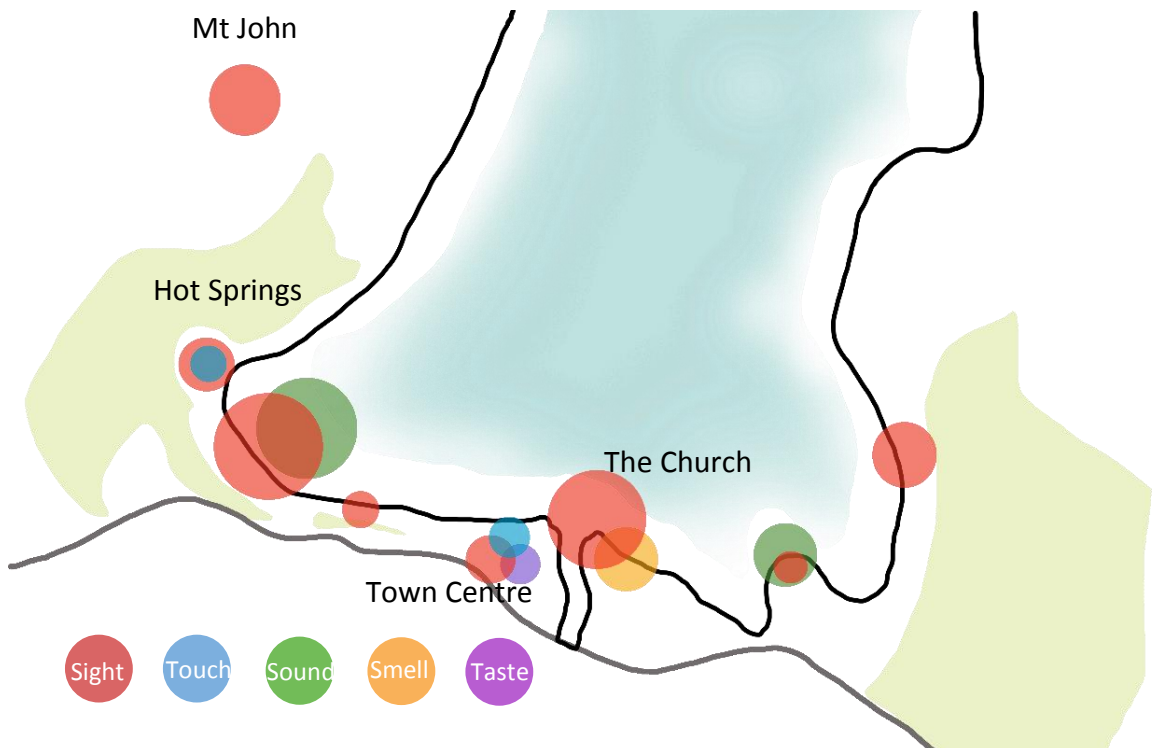


**Figure 4-2 Current experiences that can be sensed in Tekapo**

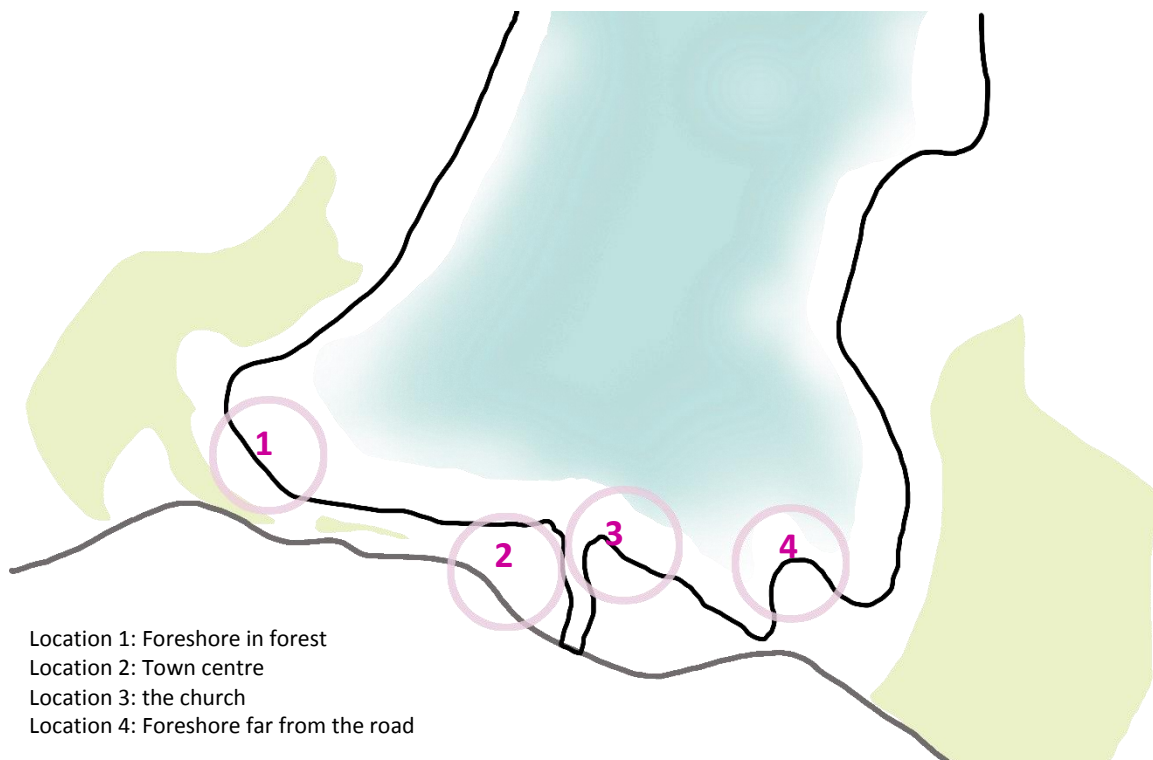
In developing the design for Tekapo, my analysis indicated that the most important focus is the lakeside path, because this path has the most potential to offer diverse experiences for tourists. Figure 4-2 shows the current most important tourist attraction: the Church of the Good Shepherd. However, the church has a narrow experiential range at present, focusing only on visual experience. Furthermore, according to my observation (see appendix A), the Church is the focus of too much attention, such that visitors limit themselves to the church, fight for spaces, and create noise at night. Too many visitors around the church also damage the natural environment of the surroundings, and recently the Mackenzie District council had to fence part of the church grounds to protect the environment (Sutherland, 2017).

Mt John also provides an amazing visual experience but its influence is less than the Church when it comes to short-stay tourists. Although visitors can drive to Mt John, they have to pay and wait to drive to the top due to the limited parking space and challenging nature of the road up the mountain. Visitors can also hike on a moderate track to the mountain top which offers a scenic view of Lake Tekapo and the tussock land. The track has the potential to provide a great experience for visitors but its access entrance is hidden in the forest just near the hot

spring. The constraints of driving and walking up Mt John makes it difficult for short stay visitors to access, as they are limited to their coach and to only short walks. The Hot Springs have both visual and tactile experiences, and have the potential for rich experiences but its location is not easy to find. Overall, the current visitor experience in Lake Tekapo is mostly limited to the visual.



**Figure 4-3 Potential experiences can be sensed in Tekapo**



**Figure 4-4 Four selected sites for design**

Figure 4-3 illustrates the potential sensory experiences the lakeside path area can offer, based on my analysis. Figure 4-4 shows the potential locations I selected for developing the design based. My overall strategy is to disperse experience attractions away from the Church, to avoid further pressure on this site. Further, the dispersal strategy can stimulate tourists to walk. My aim is to create different combinations of senses which will not repeat the same experience in different locations. As shown in Figure 4-4, I selected four potential locations for designing my proposal: foreshore in the forest, town centre, the church, and foreshore far from the road. I selected the last location based on the average walking distance among the former threes, and this place has a vast area for potential designing. I will explore these locations further in the following section and then develop potential experiences through designing.

## 4.2 Design experiments for selected sites

In this section, I will explain the details of my experience design. I intend to use photomontages to express my design concept because some designers, like James Corner, use this technique to suggest design proposals in ways which avoid being overly precise too early in the process. At this point in the process, my proposals are more like experiential concepts, which focus more on the experiences the design ideas would offer rather than the accuracy of the design themselves. Therefore, I mostly use the photomontages to explain my design idea.

### 4.2.1 Foreshore in the forest

#### Sight + Sound



Figure 4-5 Location 1

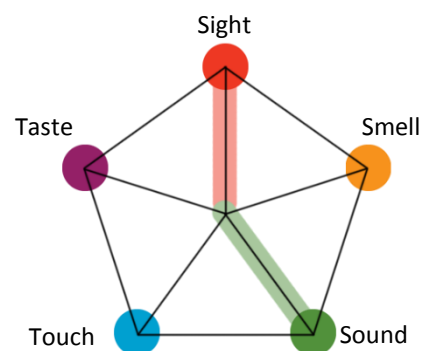


Figure 4-6 Senses analysis 1



Experience: Safety, Familiarity, Orientation, Curiosity

Senses analysis: I selected the senses of sight and sound to design experiences at the location. Figure 4-6 shows the proportions that each sense offer. Different colours represent different senses. The thicker and longer the line is, the sense is more dominated at this location and can offer more experiences opportunities. At this location, sight and sound almost have the same influence on the experimental design.

Location analysis: this site is located at the concaved part of the foreshore (Figure 4-5). There are tall and large trees surrounding the location, which make it difficult to find, especially by those tourists who only stay at Lake Tekapo for short time. On the other hand, the curved foreshore line and the mass of trees provide feelings of safety and are more private for family activities. In addition, the slope of this area is gentler, and the lakefront area is larger than the other areas in Tekapo. Also, the rocks at the foreshore around this location are smoother and less stony than the foreshore near the town centre and the Church area. This makes it an ideal location for visitors who like to enjoy water activities.

Design 1: wind bell (Figure 4-7)



**Figure 4-7 Wind bell design and materials (Photomontage created by the author through various sources)**

Design interpretation:



**Figure 4-8 Wind wand in New Plymouth (Photo: Andy Jackson)**  
**Source: Gates, 2016 (©2016 Stuff / Taranaki Daily News)**

As this place is the most hidden place among the lakefront, I intend to use sight and sound senses, which I believe are the most effective senses for a short-term engagement, creating a connection between here and the town centre.

At this location, I was inspired by the idea of a wind wand. The wind wand is a bendable sculpture by Len Lye, 45 meters high, which is installed on the shore of New Plymouth, New Zealand (Figure 4-8). It is made up of red fibreglass, and a sphere at the top which glows at night (*Wind Wand*, 2017). Drawing on the senses of sight and sound, I developed the idea of a large wind bell in the water. The wind bell is made up of metal tubes of different height, and in the middle is a pole made of fibreglass with a stone which is rocked by the wind. The stone is selected from those on the lakeside of Tekapo, and 'exhibits' it by holding it up high. When the wind blows, the stone on the shaking pole would hit the metal tube and make different bell-like sounds. The wind bell would be installed in the water because the changing lake water level would get into the tubes and leads to different heights of water level in them, which would change the tone of them. As the wind bell will be in the water, not only the wind and water could make a sound, but the people who swim in the water could also play sound by hitting the metal tube. This design will concretize the wind into the thing that people are familiar with a sound they recognise, which enhances the feelings of safety and home.

The pole would be painted with a bright colour that contrasts with the surroundings. The bright colour is eye-catching, providing a strong impression and arousing tourists' enthusiasm to lead them to explore that place. Also, the large scale of the rocking pole makes it exposed and it would stand out from the surrounding environment, which will be a strong visual

attraction to visitors. The sound made by the wind bell would also travel in various directions and distances, depending on the weather. For the tourists, the sound could be a beautiful melody or something mysterious, perhaps even alarming. These sounds would stimulate tourists' curiosity, directing them to this location.

In the summertime, the playing sound and playing people in the water would work as a sign language to other visitors that the lake is safe and it is fun to swim. This kind of sign is important for tourists who speak another language, as it does not rely on text or spoken words. This would also attract other tourists, and may encourage them to stay longer at Lake Tekapo.

The visual and hearing experience will also be a wayfinding signal which has an influence over the larger area. As the start point of the Tekapo township, the walking track is close to this hidden location, and the experiences contribute to the connection between the walking track to Mt John and the town centre.

The design of the pole itself has considerable potential for exploration. It could be a star shape with lighting or night-glowing paint. The star is an indicator that leads people towards the hot springs and Mt John where star gazing takes place. Or it could be a plant shape made of turquoise. The colour is the symbol of the lake and would emphasise this aspect. At this stage of my research, I have focussed on the location and concept for the design, and how it responded to the sensory potential. Further detailed design is beyond the scope of this current research project, but could further investigate materiality and form.

#### **4.2.2 Town Centre**

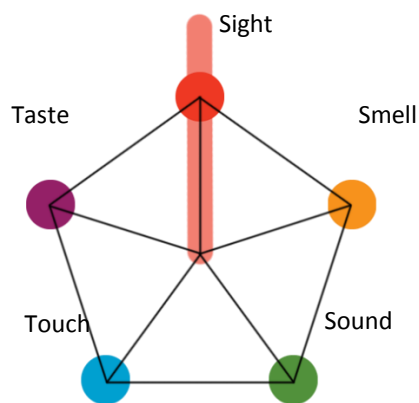


**Figure 4-9 Location 2**

Location analysis:

The town centre is planned to have well-constructed core facilities that support the local and tourism needs in Tekapo (Figure 4-9). As mentioned in the analysis of Tekapo lakefront concept plan, the stair-like slope in front of the core building area means the foreshore is not easily seen by tourists. In the future, the buildings will face to the lakeside, and that makes the empty grassland an important space to connect the town centre to the lake. In addition, the shops, facilities, services and car parks are all gathered in the town centre meaning it be the first stop for most tourists. This makes it an important site for design exploration.

## Sight

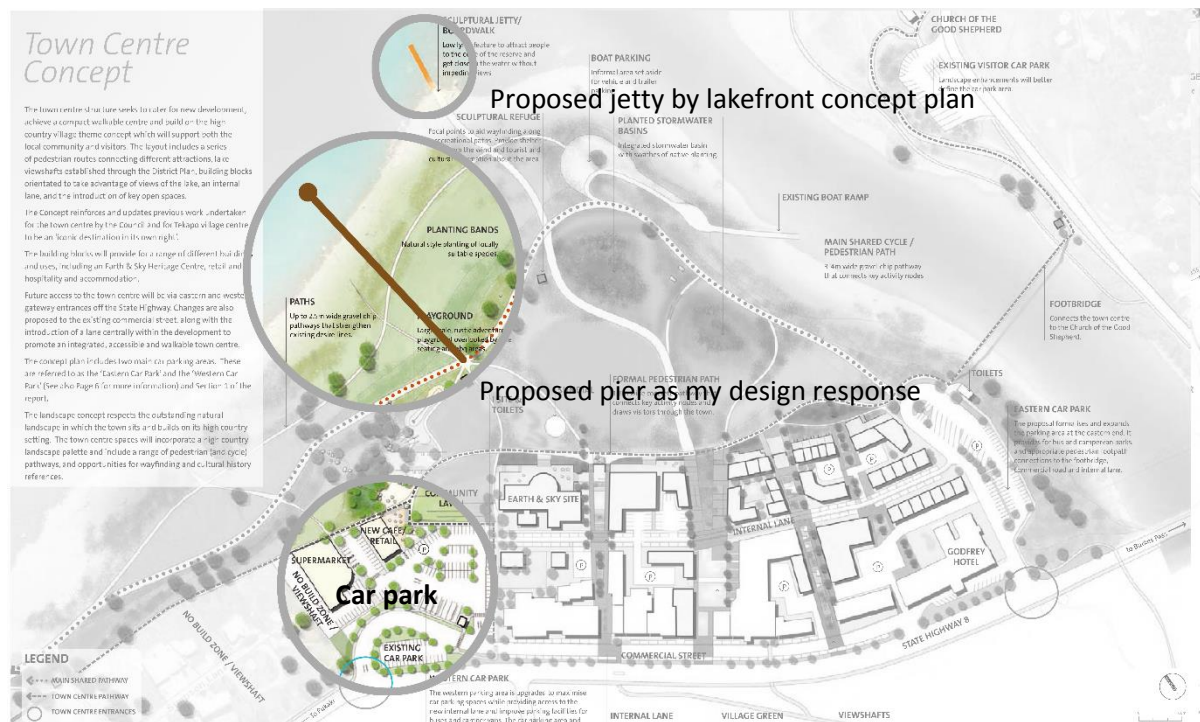


**Figure 4-10 Senses analysis 2-1**

Experience: Extend, Scary, Sublime, Unfamiliar

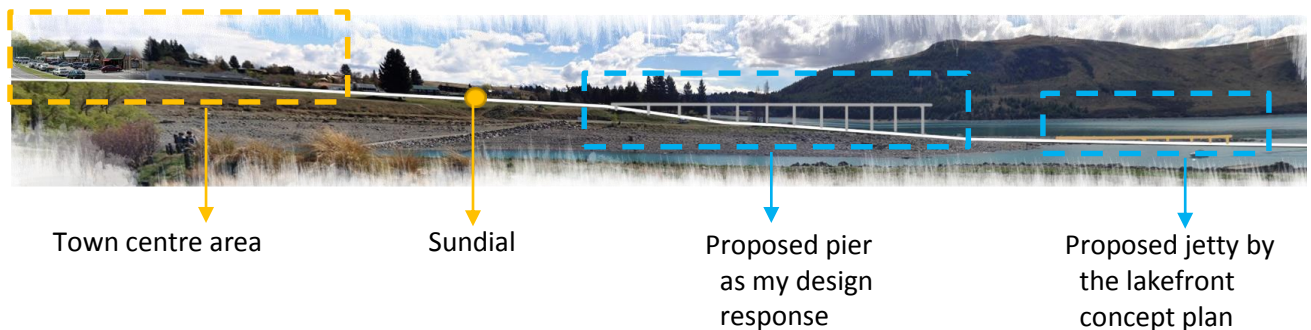
Senses analysis (Figure 4-10): at this location, I first selected sight as the dominant sense in this design experiment. In this design, the visual experience it may provide may also influence other senses contributing to the experiences beyond vision.

## Design 2-1: pier from town centre



**Figure 4-11 Location of the proposed pier**

**Source:** base map by Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd



**Figure 4-12 Design section for the proposed pier (Photomontage created by the author through various sources)**

**Design interpretation:**

In response to my critique of the lakefront concept plan, I propose an alternative design for the jetty, as a pier with glass railings and a round platform at the end (Figure 4-11). The proposed pier would start from the main shared pathway and end above the water surface. As shown in Figure 4-11, the start point of the pier is close to the town centre, and due to its high level, it cannot be blocked by the trees, the slope, or be overlooked by tourists at the

town centre area. The intention is to replace the jetty with pier, but the proposed pier would be put at the location which is close to the car park (Figure 4-11). The car park is the location that most tourists will stop at first when they arrive in Tekapo. The pier emphasises the visual connection that attracts tourists towards the lakeside.

The pier will work like an extension of the walking path. It not only extends the visual but also the physical experience. When people stay in the building area at the town centre, the pier creates a visual focus for them at their eye level. By walking to the end of the pier, visitors can see the level change of the lakeside area. The altitude between the town centre and the lake level has an almost 14m difference. But due to the long slope in front of the lakeside, the height difference is not that obvious for visitors at present. Therefore, the pier creates a direct visual opportunity to show the difference which helps people feel the level change and to appreciate how the experience can be changed by the height difference (Figure 4-12). The pier stimulates people to enhance their understanding of the local lakeside landscape. The all-glass railing on the pier helps to extend the visual experience without a barrier. When standing at the end of the pier, some people may feel the Sublime, as views are possible in all directions. The pier puts them in the position of a bird, where they can see the mountain, the lake, and the people below them. People can also touch the top part of the trees around the pier. On the other hand, some people may be scared by the transparent railing, especially when they stand at the edge of the round platform. This may be unfamiliar to them that they feel unsafe because they are exposed completely to nature. This connection between awe and fear is central to the Sublime.

In addition, the pier will be constructed with timber boards. The wooden material of the pier feels more natural. Just like the experience mentioned on the footbridge (see Appendix B), this material can concretize the invisible elements in the world, such as wind, sun, humidity. It also contributes to consistency of the materials in Tekapo, and stimulates people's sensory experience and encourages them to explore the world.

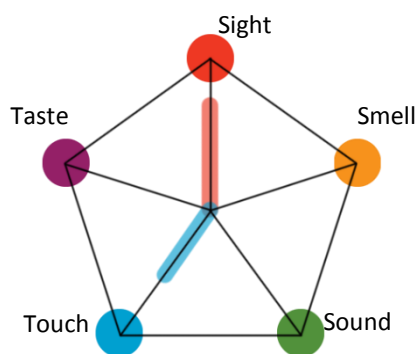
The pier also provides people with a chance to see Tekapo from a different angle. When standing at a higher level, the colour difference on the foreshore made by the changing water level will be more obvious; the hot springs may be within their sight; people may also find other places that attract them which they did not notice before. The pier puts people into the vast scale of the landscape. It shrinks the objects in the surroundings, but extends visitors'



experience out into the distance, and makes visitors aware of things that are easily overlooked or not noticed at the human scale.

The pier is proposed for the town centre, offering a platform where visitors can see the whole picture of Tekapo. This is important for tourists at Tekapo who are visiting for the first time for a short stay. This will give them an overall impression, save their time, and is beneficial for them to identify and explore the other experiences at Tekapo. The pier is an opportunity to make a strong impression on tourists' trip to Tekapo, and it may lead to revisits and longer stays.

## Sight + Touch



**Figure 4-13 Senses analysis 2-2**

Experience: Hot/Cold, Picturesque, Familiarity

Senses analysis (Figure 4-13): at this location, I selected sight and touch to enhance experiences. In this design, the visual experience would be a little stronger than the touch but their influence as individual sense on visitors' experience would not reach the strongest experience. But the combination of this two senses would have a synergy which will create greater experience than they play individually.

Design 2-2: footbath with framed shelter (Figure 4-14)



**Figure 4-14 Design for the proposed foot bath and frame (photomontage created by the author through various sources)**

Design interpretation:

The footbath is a further opportunity proposed for the foreshore in front of the town centre. The footbath is a popular experience among elderly Chinese because they believe it is beneficial for their body health.

The most distinguished function of a foot bath is that it can help people relax. If the pier is a good start to a visit, the foot bath can be a good conclusion for visitors. When people are tired of walking on the pointed rocks, when they run out of the energy of climbing mountain, when they walk along the path for a long time, they can sit on the bench and enjoy the footbath. Feeling the hot water in winter to take off their toil, or enjoying the cool water that disperses the hot weather from their body in the summertime, the footbath intensifies their experience. The contrasting experience of temperature will impress people in both physical and mental ways. The footbath is proposed to face the lakeside, so that people can enjoy the view and the water at the same time. The current foreshore has no shelter, and people's pace is limited by the rocks, and the changeable weather of Tekapo. The shelter of the footbath will be an essential place for people when the weather gets bad. Providing people with the thing they need at the neediest time can connect with people's hearts and enlarge their experience.

In addition, I have developed a shelter design that looks like a frame (Figure 4-14). The frame is the thing that visitor is familiar with, and which can attract them. The important thing is not where to put the frame, but is what is in the frame and what can be seen through the frame. Besides natural beauty, people can see other people within the frame. It will be like the scene that described in a Chinese poem called Fragments: “When you watch the scenery from the bridge, the sightseer watches you from the balcony. The bright moon adorns your window, while you adorn another’s dream” (Yang & Dai, 2016). The visitors can enjoy the view from the foot bath, but they may also be the subject within the view from other visitors' eyes. People can have their own experience but they are also part of other people’s experience. Different positions for the visitor to experience may add some romance to the place and enhance their attachment of being in Tekapo.

### 4.2.3 Church of the Good Shepherd

#### Smell + sight + touch

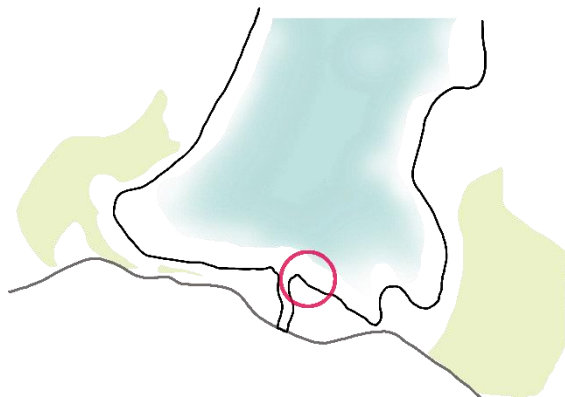


Figure 4-15 Location 3

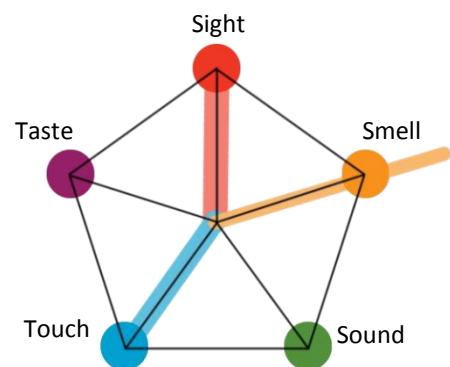


Figure 4-16 Senses analysis 3

Experience: Memory, Immersion, Cold, Time, Solitude

Senses analysis (Figure 4-16): at this location, I selected smell, sight and touch to enhance experiences. In this design, the sight and the touch experience would have stronger influence on visitors than smell, but smell would influence visitors’ experience in the long term.

Location analysis: this site is located in the area around the Church of the Good Shepherd (Figure 4-15). In the summertime, lupin flowers around the foreshore and have become an iconic photo opportunity. The rocks here are pointed and not easy to walk on. The Church is a landmark of Tekapo and is located at the highest position of this area. The Church is also the

most popular scene for tourists to photograph in Tekapo in both the daytime and night time. A sheep dog statue next to the Church is also a popular spot for tourists to take photos. In front of the Church is a large parking area. Many tourists' cars are parked here, usually staying for half an hour. In order to protect the night sky reserve, there is no lighting at this location at night.

Design 3: sky gazing underwater observatory

Design interpretation:

### ***Lupins***

For the Chinese tourists, I intend to attract them at first with the visual and smell experience of the lupins, creating and recalling memories, giving them a strong impression of Tekapo. In other seasons when the lupins are not flowering, it would be useful to explore other ways of using lupin-related material, and I would give some design ideas in the next content. But overall that would be part of a wider strategy beyond the scope of my current research project.

For the locals, the Russel lupin is a good food source for merino sheep farming and it contributes to the enhancing of the quality of soil from poor to rich (White, 2017). However, the local people are also fighting with the lupins. The lupins invade the river system and block the riverbed; they threaten native birds because they provide protection for predators; they also influence the birds' habitat and endangers the local biodiversity (*Russell Lupin*, n.d.; Wardle, 2016).

Although New Zealanders are torn in their feelings about lupins, the flowers are only positive in their symbolism for the Chinese people. "Lu Bing Hua", which is the Chinese name for lupins, was a name of the movie which released in Taiwan, 1989 (*Lu bing hua*, 1989). And in 1991, the theme song, named after the movie, was performed on the stage of the Chunwan (CNTV, 2009). Chunwan, also known as the Chinese Spring Festival Gala, was the most watched and important TV programme in China ("Chinese New Year Gala," n.d.). The song became famous all around China. Another reason the song became popular and made deep impressions in China was that it praised the mother's deep love in a sentimental melody with poetic lyrics (Wu, 2011). That made the song a classic touching nursery rhyme for people, especially the children who were born in the 1990s.

Nowadays, when it comes to Lu Bing Hua, most Chinese will recall the song and lupins became the flower that represents mother's love in China. However, even though the lupin has a significant symbolism in China, it is not a Chinese native plant, and is not commonly used in Chinese landscape because there are few areas of the country that have suitable growing conditions (Yang & Zhu, 2016). As a result, many Chinese have not seen a real Lupin with their own eyes. For most Chinese, Lu Bing Hua is a flower that lives only in their imagination. And thanks to the amazing night sky, the scenery of the lupins under the night stars matches the scene that is described in the song. Therefore, seeing Lupins in Tekapo not only makes these tourists' dreams come true, but also recall their childhood memory. For those people who have seen Lupins before, the smell of the large lupin field would also recall their past experience, as the smell is closely associated with memory recollection.

As part of my design, I proposed a souvenir that is simple and easy to carry, but also filled with the fragrance of lupins. The souvenir would work as a memory carrier, so that, whenever and wherever people smell the souvenir, it would bring back their memory to the day they visited Tekapo and bring back the experience.

The souvenir could be a postcard with dried and pressed lupin flowers, or a small card with lupin perfume. It could also be more interactive, teaching tourists to make their own pressed lupin flower, or maybe a drawing that simply shows the visitors they can cut and take some lupin with them when they leave (Figure 4-17 & Figure 4-18). These opportunities would



**Figure 4-17 Lupins around the Church (Photo: Author)**



enrich the smell experience of tourists. Furthermore, using lupins as a source of income would benefit for the local environment and reduce the financial pressure since the Department of Conservation spends over \$100,000 annually to control the damage that lupins cause in rivers (White, 2017). visitors would be both contributing income and removing lupins from problem areas.



**Figure 4-18 proposed image that indicate visitor can take lupins by themselves (Photomontage created by the author through various sources)**

In this design, I am not proposing to reduce tourist focus on lupins but to increase their affection for it, thereby turning the lupin into a product that makes it consumable. This means the lupins can not only enrich tourists' experience, but also help to control its harm to nature. Although this is not a perfect solution to the lupin problem, it offers some advantages, and would provide the chance for ongoing research into benefits and threats from lupins.

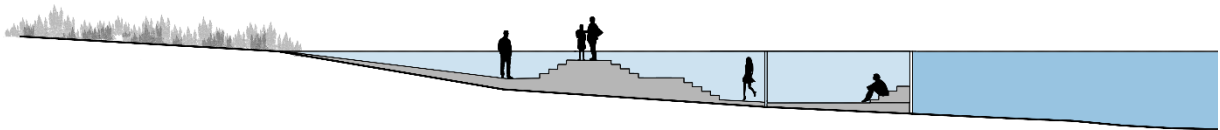
I have proposed a souvenir shop in the place of the current parking area. The aim is to reduce the parking space and replace it with well-designed gardens and the souvenir shop. Currently, part of the parking area is the key route for pedestrian and cyclists. But the frequent car movements make this path dangerous, which discourages people from walking. My analysis indicates that the massive parking area in front of the church disturbs the view and blocks the walking and cycling experience from the town centre to there. Furthermore, the parking area is only beneficial for those tourists who are only fixated on this one icon and this limits tourists' activities in this area and decrease their opportunities for diverse experience. Replacing part of the parking area could make a clear and safe walking connection from the footbridge to the Church, encouraging tourists' walking experience from the town centre to the foreshore of the church. Also, the shop would provide shelter for tourists in case of sudden bad weather. At present, tourists tend to crush into the small church, exceeding its capacity and compromising its core role as a religious building.



## ***Underwater observatory***



**Figure 4-19 Underwater observatory (Photomontage created by the author through various sources)**



**Figure 4-20 Section of the proposed underwater observatory**

I developed a proposal for a three-metre wide path from the church into the lakeside water (Figure 4-19). As the foreshore in this area is full of pointed and unstable rocks of various sizes, people need to be very careful about what they are standing on when they walk on the foreshore. As a result, it is hard to encourage more tourists to walk to the water edge and touch the water, especially for the elderly and disabled, and particularly in the winter time. The proposed path offers tourists the opportunity to walk to the lakeside and enjoy the view at the same time. On the other hand, some people may be interested in walking on those rocks because it is challenging for them or may just because there are too many people on the path.

The pointed rocks and smooth path create different walking experiences under people's feet. The contrasting tactile experience would deepen their connection with the local natural landscape.

At the part of the path where it goes into the water, there are steps that lead people to walk through the experience of going up and going down (Figure 4-20). The process of walking from the path into the water with level change is a process that sees people standing on the landscape, moving out of the landscape, and finally becoming immersed in the landscape. It provides the space for people to enrich their experiences at Tekapo, in a vertical direction. By walking through it, people could experience the level change and have diverse feelings. Also, the changing water level will also enrich people's experience at the different times of the day, and seasons of the year.

People touch the landscape with their feet and see the landscape at their eye level at first. Then they go up with stairs, keeping a distance from the ground; they can feel the air, and wind, and feel they are part of nature at a higher level (Figure 4-20). After that, they go down the stairs and end in the round area with a surrounding glass wall. With the help of stairs, people could adjust their position of the connection with water the surface. Visitors can touch the water, feeling the coldness of the water which comes from the glaciers; they can set themselves at the boundary of the water and air which is an unfamiliar position to be in, and they can experience the waving edge. Eventually, in the round area, people will be under the water level, and can experience being in the water, being in the world. Some people may feel scared and be daunted by the pressure from the water; some may be attracted by the creatures underwater, such as salmon, brown and rainbow trout (*Lake Tekapo Trout Fishing*, n.d.; Tatham, 2016). When people look up, they will not be influenced by the built environment which dominates their daily lives, they will only see the pure sky. The round shape offers experience from all angles, without being disturbed by other visitors. It also works like a nest, bringing those urban birds “back to their forest” and feel at one with Mother Nature again. Also, people will not have a clear sense of time passing. The only thing that relates to time is the moving clouds and stars at day and night. The blurred sense of time will also encourage them to become more immersed in the space, and slow down their pace, and their experience.

In addition, this place would also be a perfect location for people enjoying the night sky. The path will be equipped with small floor lights. The light would guide people and not be too strong, to avoid intruding on star gazing. The place could separate the photographers and the visitors at night, and reduce the aggressive tension of photographers (see Appendix A). The

weak light would reduce the conflict between people and encourage them to focus on the experience of nature.

#### 4.2.4 Foreshore far from the road

##### Sight + Sound + Touch



Figure 4-21 Location 4

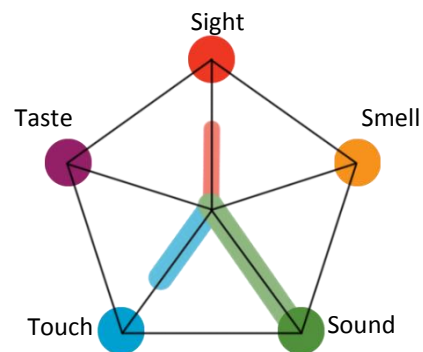


Figure 4-22 Senses analysis 4

Experience: Quiet, Immersion, Sublime, Solitude, Light/Shadow, Shrink/Extend

Senses analysis (Figure 4-22): at this location, I selected sight, sound and touch to enhance experiences. In this design, the sound would be the dominant sense, and the visual would have the least influence among the three senses. Contrasting to use sound to attract visitor, the design at this site is going to use silent to attract them.

Location analysis:

This location is at the convex part of the foreshore which is far from the Church and town centre (Figure 4-21). People can walk along the lakeside path to get there. There are round shaped trees scattered on the foreshore with an open view. The rocks at this location are not as pointed as at location 2, and there is a greater distance from the road edge to the foreshore. In the summertime, lupins are growing in the area near to the road area and grass will make this area greener. This location is close to the Tekapo regional park which has dense tall pine trees and is also far away from the residential area which makes it truly quiet. It is also a location that most tourists do not visit. This location has an open view, and large area, but still has privacy to some degree.

#### Design 4: Mirror house with a cross



**Figure 4-23 Proposed mirror house (Photomontage created by the author through various sources)**

#### Design interpretation:

This proposal is a simple and small mirror house at the water's edge and a cross in front of it in the water (Figure 4-23). The mirror house concept is developed from my case studies in chapter 2. It is envisaged as a mirror house with a cross rather than a mirror church, because this place will not just offer experiences for Christians, but also those from other religions, or who are not religious. The building can have different meanings for different people, and keeping it as a house rather than a church allows for this openness of meaning. At this point, the building is just a 'concept sketch' based on mirror houses around the world. I have indicated as a photomontage to illustrate how it would interact with the landscape, and there is considerable potential for this to be developed, potentially in collaboration with a sculptor.

The mirror house would not have a specific path leading to it. My response to the location is to allow people to enjoy the quietness, and people who are looking for silence and want to experience the sublimity of peace will find their own way to the house.

The mirrored surface of the house creates reflections that makes the house appear immersed in the surroundings from the eyes of the people outside. The reflections would bring a range

of scenery to the same surface. Visitors can experience the views in ways which would not be possible for them to be seen in nature. The views on the mirror house with the surroundings blur the boundary of views, mixing the landscape and disturbing people's usual visual experience. The experience will be like a kaleidoscope, people may be interested in it at first, but after staring it for a longer time, and they may find it disturbing. This will challenge people to not only rely on their visual sense, but to use their other senses to experience the world. Because people usually sense the world using mainly their visual sense, they ignore the experiences that their other senses may bring them. This limits their enjoyment of the world and the diverse experiences that the world offers.

After having their vision disturbed, visitors will find that the inside of the house can calm them down. While the underwater observatory helps people become immersed into nature, the mirror house helps them to immerse into the depth of themselves. When people go into the house, the only light they will see comes from the large glass window that faces the lake. The darkness inside the house makes the light even brighter. The house shrinks people's surrounding space but the window extends the space through their visual experience. Because there is only one window which faces the lake, people inside are isolated from the world because they cannot be sensed by others from the outside. As a result of the isolation, they can have a moment that only belongs to themselves, and they can also take a break from the earthliness. In addition, the cross provides a point of connection for religious visitors and enhances the experience of peace at this place. As the Church is getting over-popular, it is more like a landmark object than a functional church for most tourists. In my observations, I noticed that the number of visitors was constant, and did not fluctuate whether the church was open or not (see appendix A). Also, the coming and going of tour buses, and large number of tourists make the church area truly noisy. Visitors appear more motivated to photograph the classic view of the cross through the window than being involved in any religious observation, and this makes the church seems less solemn. Therefore, this location provides the opportunity for people who want to have a quiet space and it also separates them from the tourists and photographers.

Moreover, as the house is located at the water edge, the path to the house may be under the water sometimes because of the changing water level. At that time, visitors cannot go into the house without touching the water. Touching the water not only enriches visitors' experience but also "washes" their mind, which helps them to be more immersed in the experience.

Usually, in order to offer more experience, designers add more to the landscape to create various activities for people. But sometimes, too many additional things just make people feel exhausted, especially the tourists who have a limited time. Maybe it is time to do some subtraction. Pallasmaa (1994, p. 41) observed that the current architecture emphasises on the art of vision and it is becoming a flat picture. This flatness is a phenomenon that stops people from being in the world. Pallasmaa (2000) responded this phenomenon with the idea of "fragile architecture". This fragile architecture is "contextual and responsive". This idea is underlined through multisensory interaction experiences, meaning that the architecture should grow and develop gradually instead of a quick fixed concept by vision alone. According to this theory, I intend to reduce the dazzling experience, weaken the visual influence of the experience, and stress the importance of their other senses. I want to shrink visitors' physical experience and extend their mental area. The house is intended as a place to let people think, let their mind breathe. The way of finding the house is also like the way people find themselves.

#### 4.2.5 Potential Experience Designs

##### Walking experience through Mt John walking track



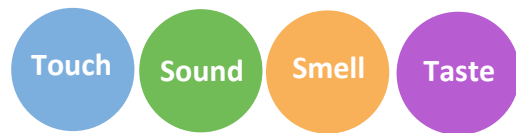
I had my first trip to Lake Tekapo in 2014. The most impressive memory I have was the walking journey on the Mt John track (see details in appendix C). During the trip of more than 4 hours, I experienced the Sublime at the top of the mountain, fear when I thought I was lost, exhaustion when I ran out of energy, and happiness when I realised I finally saw the start point of my trip. I was truly getting in touch with nature with my whole body. That is a memory not only in my mind, but also in my physical body.

I took many more photos of the Church, the lupins, and the sky, but only have a few photos from when I was at the top of the mountain. However, this experience ranked as the top thing I remember when it comes to Tekapo. I can still recall the tiredness, the fear, the endless journey and the happiness from that journey. From my point of view, walking is the most unforgettable experience that visitors should try. One of the very challenging parts of designing for experience in Tekapo is how to encourage tourists to walk instead of driving up



Mt John. Although I have explored how to direct them to the track through design, walking up the hill is a further demand that I have not resolved at this point. It is something I will contribute to explore in my design practice.

### Experience design for break point in the journey



Because the walking path along the lakeside is a long journey, I believe there should be some break points along the path. In the Tekapo development concept plan, the designer suggests using refuges, wayfinding devices, and seats at the break points (Aurecon Group and Boffa Miskell Ltd, 2015, p. 15), but as discussed before, these designs are not strong enough to keep tourists on the right track. Moreover, most of these design focus only on the visual experience. There are other senses which can be used to enrich experience and attract people. For example, using the bell as a wayfinding device, so that people follow the sound and would hit the bell when they come to the point, and the following sound would attract other visitors. This may create a positive circulation, and the chain reaction would attract more people. Another example is using smell as the main experience. People will be informed at town centre that walking on the path is a collecting game. There are fragrance collecting cards at each point and the final checkpoint is Mt John. People who collect all the cards can bring them home and have an extra gift as a reward. Using those break points as part of a rewarding game may mobilize tourists' enthusiasm, which will encourage them to finish the walk and enrich their experience at Tekapo. Besides fragrance cards, other products could also be used to present local characters. However, I am focusing on landscape architecture, so I have limited my design exploration to landscape materials and spatial design.

### Salmon festival or salmon market



Food is an important part of Chinese tourism, and I was inspired by it and considering how to use food in design. Food festivals could be a way to attract tourists. There is a salmon farm

nearby, and although it is not located in Tekapo, the farm started because of the nutritious water and the dam built in Tekapo. Therefore, having a salmon-themed festival or market at Tekapo would reinforce this connection. The festival could be held in the town centre area. The smell and taste of food in the festival or market can impress tourists and involve them in the local atmosphere. Moreover, those experiences for tourists are important not only at the time, but also as a precious memory. After they leave Tekapo, wherever they smell or taste the same thing again, they may recall this experience of Tekapo.

# Chapter 5

## Discussion and Conclusion

One of the challenges for designing landscape for tourism is to enhance sense of place. This is what makes locations unique and memorable, therefore making an impression on tourism. Designing for short-visit tourists, such as Chinese coach tourists, is even more demanding. How can their limited timeframes allow for intense and memorable experiences? How can we balance the demand for tourism development and local landscape characters during the development? Through using Lake Tekapo, a typical booming village in tourism development, as a case study, I intend to respond to these questions by design.

I began my research by exploring the theory of sense of place to identify the connections between people and place, phenomenology to understand the nature of experience, and the tourist behaviours to analyse the behaviour patterns that characterise different cultures. In order to apply these theories into the design, I also explored several case studies to create my own design toolkit. Through analysing the lakefront concept plan, and the context of Lake Tekapo, I explored diverse designs for experiences at Lake Tekapo. Through the exploring, analysing and designing process, I found that the developing balance of a place is related to the balance of experiences the place offer. The current situation at Lake Tekapo has issues for further development because most of the experiences it provides focuses on the visual experiences. Therefore, my goal was to design the experiences for the other senses to enrich the experiences in Lake Tekapo, and provide potential futures that are more responsive to place.

My design research was focused on the experiences at four specific locations along the lakeside. I focussed on experience in developing my design proposals, because the experience is both personal and universal. Experience can communicate beyond language and culture, which is very important for Tekapo, where many international visitors spend time at. These sites were selected to be the potential locations that could exhibit experience designs. The first location in the forest is not easy to find. Here I explored a strategy of using over human-scaled wayfinding design, along with acoustic elements. This design explored the idea of contrast: the contrast of scale, the contrast of colour, and the contrast of hard and soft

materials, creating visual and sound experiences. The key emphasis in this location was for a design that could express a strong impression that catches visitors' attention quickly and works well as a wayfinding device.

The second location is the town centre where is the key place for retails and other facilities are mainly concentrated. It is the place that visitors and locals use frequently and communicate with others. The proposal for this site emphasised the advantages of the huge height difference between the town and the lake level. According to the analysis of the lakefront concept plan, the height difference tends to obscure views of the lake edge, but the proposed pier design uses it as an advantage to encourage visitors to experience the landscape. Added to this is the frame design which can also maximise the potential of the height and capture the pure natural scenery without any visual barriers. The level change provides great opportunities to create various activities at different levels and enrich experiences.

The third location is the Church of the Good Shepherd. As a local landmark, it is the most popular place where most visitors have a strong impression. I followed the method of reduction, which not only disperses the attractions, but also challenges this fixed view of the church. I explored how to balance the impression of visual experience with the experiences of smell and touch. These senses may not attract visitors quickly, but they are memory carriers and are therefore significant elements to enhance. The current church is suffering through being dominated by tourists, making religious services difficult. Dispersing activities, including to the mirrored building, will help to reduce pressure on the church.

The fourth location is the place that most visitors are not aware of. I use this feature to design a space where people can experience quietness. Instead of making sound, my strategy was to use tranquillity to attract people. This is also a place for slow experience, a place for people to relieve their nerves and have the opportunity for experiencing the peace in their lives.

The four design proposals I have developed explore the ways in which objects can intervene in the way we experience landscape. I have not indicated major changes to the landscape itself, apart from the small interventions into the lake edge for the underwater observatory. As a dissertation offers limited opportunities in terms of time and resources available, I have kept these interventions at a conceptual level, and explored how concepts used in a range of other places, but will be very different in the Tekapo setting – and which would be developed

further in an actual consultancy situation. The design proposals are tools for exploring, rather than endpoints. Because most visitors to Tekapo are short stay, my intention is to propose small designs that could attract visitors and offer them opportunities to have an impressive experience in a limited time. Visitors could experience the local landscape from diverse angles through these designs, which would help them get into the local landscape quickly. In the meantime, they could also gain knowledge of local landscape and create an unforgettable memory. Therefore, the design proposals are the short term design concept which is also the preparation for a long-term design process.

According to the history of Tekapo, several decisions resulted in the current layout of Tekapo which have positive and negative influences. It is important to be able to understand more about the nature of visitors to Tekapo, particularly the significant numbers of visitors from a range of cultural backgrounds who visit the town in great numbers. However, this is a very recent development, and there is little data available at this point. The landscape and the visitor market are changing, so decisions must be made in ways which find the balance point. There is a need to test some design possibilities, and explore how visitors respond to them. These design concepts would help to explore these possibilities, such as the options of a dispersed village rather than more concentrated and 'urban' town centre, and through this to help build the foundation for a long-term development process.

The literature review offers a theoretical support to the design while the case studies offer the practical support. The combination of these two methods provide various design opportunities and inspired me to think of the design from different angles. Through critiquing the case studies and connecting them to my site, I was able to explore possibilities and apply them. Through critiquing the lakefront concept plan, I can explore further about the feasibility and compatibility of the case studies and lakefront concept plan. And the design research provides me with the opportunity to test my analysis. The critiquing process at every stage is very useful for me to explore my research step by step and push me to think further and deeper.

In addition, using the five senses to guide designing is a new method I explored in my design research. This analytical diagram gave me a clear illustration of the combination of different senses. I can see the weakness of my designed experience and adjust the senses to get a

relative balance in my design. And through beginning the design process with the five senses, I was able to set clear goals and move through conceptual ideas towards practical designs.

The combination of the knowledge of sensory and phenomenology offers me a new way to connect people and nature. Designing experience with this knowledge would create a connection between quick-visit tourist and the local landscape. Furthermore, as these senses may not only impress visitors when they are on site, but the combination of these may also trigger memories for years to come. The more times the experience is recalled, the more profound the memory is. Because of this effect, the experience would have a long-term influence on the visitors which may strengthen this connection.

However, there are also limitations in the design research. I can use design to lead people to the entrance to the walking track, but I cannot persuade them to walk on it. Other design ideas like the fragrant card, food festival are beyond my ability as a landscape architect. As a designer, I could design the bridge between the place and people, but how to ensure this connection work, how to motivate people to make communication are the problems that need to be solved in the future. Landscape architects have a strong set of skills relating to place and context, and can contribute to the temporal and spatial challenges of designing for tourists. Working with other design professions there are opportunities to deepen connections with place, and help even short visits by tourists become more vivid and memorable.



## **Appendix A**

### **Experience observation notes 1 in autumn**

17/04/2017, Monday, sunny & warm, 12°C

18/04/2017, Tuesday, sunny & windy & little chill, 11°C

#### **A.1 Church of the Good Shepherd**

##### **Daytime:**

Camera obscura: people tended to enter the church and wanted to take photos through the window which has the cross in front of in the church. When they noticed that taking photos was not allowed in the church, they went outside the church, standing in front of the door and took the photos at the same position and with the same intention.

Taking photos: people taking photos or selfie with the church before reaching the church. Also, they tried to take photos of the church from different angles. Even the church was closed for one hour, and people still taking photos. It seemed that the church means more like an architecture to them rather than a functioned church.

##### **Night time:**

Most people tended to stay in the west part of the church, which is the most common angle that was shown on most postcards or advertisement. Most of the photographers had a tripod and professional equipment, and they were so aggressive and unfriendly to the people who walked near the church. I walked to the church with my friend in the night-time, after parking my car, I heard the talking sound came from the church side. Because there was no street light, and it was so dark there, I used the light of my phone to guide me. When we walked close to the church, we heard some people said “go away” so loud to us. After standing on the same side with the photographer, I saw them do the similar thing to other people. An Asian male may not understand English because he still walked around the church after they said:” go away”. So the most aggressive people use a flashlight with strong light shone on his face and force him to leave. Even when the cars came near with light, they complain about it. The photographer from the different area with different nationalities and they may not even know each other. But at night, they became a group with a strong connection and seemed to be

good old friends when they targeted the people they thought disturbed their photo taking. They saw the church and the night sky as their castle and they were the truly faithful knights to defend its beauty. They saw the people close to the church as enemies and expelled them away from the church.

### **Cairns**

People went close to the cairns and took photos of them, but not touching them or making one by themselves.

### **Rocks:**

Visitors, especially Asians, tend to take photos with rocks. Besides the church, they tended to stand on the suitable rocks with different poses to take photos. Besides the lakeside, they found large rocks to do the same thing. They may also stay in groups and sit or relax on the rocks. Also, people tended to take photos with the rocks that someone just took or taking photos with, which end up with the same rocks featured in people's photos.

### **Sheep Dog Statue:**

People, especially Asian people, like to stand on the foundation of the sculpture, and taking photos with different gestures on or around the dog sculpture. Some of them walked together and surrounded the sculpture.

People's walking route seemed to be settled by an invisible wall, especially the people in group tours. Almost all of them got out of the car, which was parked in the car park in front of the church, and walked towards to the church. Walked into the church for no more than 1 minute, walked around it, took photos on the rocks or beside flax, walked to the lakeside, took photos on the large rocks, relax for a while, walked to the dog sculpture, took photos with it, went back to the car. Even for some of the people from the group tour who have more time to stay, they tend to follow this route rather than walking around to other areas. They were not tending to walk on the bridge or sitting in the picnic area which was farther than the dog sculpture.

### **Bridge:**

The number of people walking on the bridge is much less than the number of people visiting the church. Some people stayed on the bridge for a while to take photos, but most of them just used the bridge as the shorter connection from the town centre to the church. That may be because the bridge is not wide enough or has space for people to stay. However, I and my friend found the bridge was a great feature to create a beautiful scene for photo taking. I found that some people shared the same points with us, and took photos of the bridge.

## **A.2 Lake Pukaki**

Mount Cook alpine salmon shop:

This shop was a stopping point near Lake Tekapo for Chinese tour groups. They got off the buses, walked into the shop. Some of them brought the salmon sashimi and enjoyed them at the sitting area out of the shop.

Taking photos:

Chinese tourists almost gathering around the viewing point at lake side to take photos. Even when there was a gradient of the rocks at the lakeside, some of them still tended to find large rocks and got as close as to the lake side to take photos.

The tahr sculpture:

Because there was no Chinese text on the plate which explained the history of the tahr, I believed most of them did not understand what the sculpture means. However, there were Chinese waiting in line to take photos with the sculpture in different poses.

## **A.3 Astro Cafe**

People showed the similar intention. They took photos on large rocks. Because there were too many people around the cafe area, the seats were not enough for everyone. People tend to sit on the ground. There was a relatively flat edge on the side of ground that a small amount of Asian was sitting there. And then, more Asian people were sited there in a line even they did not know each other. My friend also tended to sit there.

Chinese people tend to have some group behaviour even when they were not truly in a physical group. Once there was pioneer doing one thing, then the others may follow. It seems to make them feel safe when they were in the unfamiliar environment.

## Photo taking habits

Chinese people, especially the people seems around their forties or fifties, tended to take photos with real professional digital single lens reflex cameras. Some of them even have more than one. I did not know they are true professionals or not, but it seemed that taking photos with professional equipment with professional-like gesture was part of their experience.

## **Appendix B**

### **Experience observation notes 2 in winter**

21/08/2017, Monday, partly cloudy, hail & windy, 7°C

22/08/2017, Tuesday, sunny & windy, 6°C

#### **B.1 Church of the Good Shepherd**

##### **Daytime:**

Due to the lower lake level, the stone beach showed more area around the church. The larger area of the empty stone beach looks boring, and not many people gathering to the edge of the lake front, especially the elder people. The unorganized big and small stones make the stone beach not easy to walk on, but there still were people walking through it to get to the lake edge and taking photos around large stones. The stone beach had a different coloured line which indicated the past season's lake level around the church. However, these seasonal change experiences may merely be perceived by the visitors who may visit here in different seasons.

##### **Taking photos:**

People were still taking photos around the church, but the gathering area was smaller and closer to the church compared with last observation (see Appendix A). More able bodied and fit visitors walked to the edge of the lake but they were more scattered. Because it is winter time, the snowy mountains are a truly distinguished landscape that can be enjoyed. Therefore, more people walked towards the south-east stone beach, which was closer to the snow covered mountains.

Many Asian people also liked to take photos with people jumping. But the unstable stone beach makes it unsafe to do that, so they may be gathered around the church.

##### **Night time:**

Because in this season, the temperature at night is lower than the last observation, even though the sky was clear, there were not many people gathering at the same spot taking

photos. People just scattered around the church, not forming a photographing group that was so aggressive like last time.

From my point of view, due to the newly relocated Four Square supermarket, the light from and near the supermarket made the area surrounding the church brighter than last time. Some cars' lights from the town centre shone towards the church, and made the church area a less attractive photographing environment than last time.

#### **Cairns:**

The cairns I observed last time have been damaged a little, but there were more cairns built close to the edge of the lake. An Asian couple made a large and tall one and taking a selfie with it.

#### **Sheep Dog Statue:**

More people gathered and took photos around the statue. That may be because the statue, the bright sunlight and the snow mountain background formed a pretty picture for them.

#### **Bridge:**

Due to the changeable weather, the wooden boards were very wet from small hail. After the sky was bright again, I walked on to the bridge. Wind side of the wooden boards were dry and the other side of them was wet. When I saw these, I started to feel the wind. I stood on the bridge to perceive the wind direction. I noticed that a man walked towards me also noticed the part wet and part dry wood board. The wooden board made the hail, the wind, the weather visible and connect them to people's experience.

#### **Animals:**

In the daytime, there were beautiful small birds in the bush along the walkway, and they were not afraid of people. In the night, when we drove through the dark forest, plenty of rabbits were seen along the road. In summer time, there were ducks walking on the walking track. The living and friendly animals are really an attraction for Chinese people. Animals which are free to move around are barely seen in Chinese small towns, and Chinese enjoy their company and like to stop their pace for those animals and taking photos of them.

#### **Weather:**



I when to the church area in the afternoon. The weather was clear at first, then when I took photos of the lake side in front of the church, I found half my screen was darker and foggy. My first thought was my screen was broken, but then I found that was the true weather. The sky had a clear line of grey cloud and clear sky. Then, it rained and turned in to hail afterwards. That weather was so strange and attractive from a Chinese view. The weather seemed to have less effect on western people, but Asian were hidden in their cars or try to use the church as a shelter. Unfortunately, the church was closed. So they ran away and left the church. That prompted me to realise that around the church area there was no shelter. Asian people really like to have shelter in winter time and summer, especially in changeable weather.

## **B.2 Hot springs**

The location of hot spring is not distinguished. Even though they have an office in the town centre, if people just drive to Lake Tekapo with any preparation, they may miss it. The springs are located down further along the lakefront, near the backpackers and camping, and the only sign is 250m head of the hot spring. People who decide to climb Mt John may see the hot spring. However, due to its location, it has a clear and quiet view of the snow mountain when people are sitting and enjoying the hot spring.

### **Star gazing tour in the hot spring at night:**

The Mandarin tour was an amazing experience in hot spring. The tour guide introduced and explained the knowledge of stars based on Maori culture background of New Zealand. The knowledge and fun facts they offered were new to me and I really enjoyed to know that, even though I was outside and cold. Then when I soaked myself in the hot spring, while enjoying the clear sky, the experience was a treasure. The preceding cold weather made the hot spring a more valued experience. The soft red light and music released my body and nerves. When gazing at the sky from the hot spring, the time seemed to go so slow, but when I was told the tour almost finished, I felt the time went so fast that I had not had enough. I was told that winter is the best season for star gazing, and I believed that the winter and hot spring are truly good combination for night sky experience.

The place outside the hot spring is also good for photographing. Due to the star gazing tour and its location, there was almost pure darkness with no bright light. The guidance offered

photographing skills for people who were not good at night sky photographs. People could have a quiet and peaceful environment to take their photos without disturbing others.

### **B.3 Town centre**

#### **Sign:**

Most of the signs in and around Lake Tekapo are only words on plates. Regardless of international visitors, the signs are not distinguished for people like me who visit the place more than once. Because the town centre and attractions of Lake Tekapo are along the highway, that makes the signs hard to read in a 60km/h speed. Moreover, when people approach from the Christchurch direction, and they see the lake they finally realise they have arrived in Lake Tekapo, but that was only 1.3km away from the church. People who drove here would miss the signs easily.

#### **Carpark:**

There is too much parking space in front of the buildings facing the main highway. The cars blocked the views and make the town centre less attractive. The renewed main car park not only has no clear signs but also an unorganised route which creates an unsafe and unpleasant experience.

#### **Buildings:**

The buildings face in two directions. The buildings along the road face the highway while the buildings at the back facing the lake. However, those buildings were not perfectly opposite each other. When walking along the highway side, people saw the back part of the building facing the lake side, vice versa. The back part of the building was not well-designed, with rubbish bins or waste construction materials. Furthermore, some spaces between the buildings which has a great view towards lake were not fully used. That forms an unpleasant experience that stops people from walking. If the buildings would make it transparent for both sides, I think that would provide a better experience.

## **Appendix C**

### **Mt John walking track journey in 2014 summer**

12/11/2014, Wednesday, sunny, chill & snow, 7°C

I had my first trip to Lake Tekapo in 2014. The most impressive memory I have was the walking journey on the Mt John walking track.

When I stood at the starting point, I read the sign said that there are two ways that you can get to Mt John, one was one hour and the other was four hours. I chose the road for one hour. When I was climbing in the forest, I did not notice too much about the surroundings. But when I saw an open grassland with fewer pine trees, I knew I was almost at the top. I reflected back on my climb up the mountain and I was amazed by the view. The vast pine trees were at the bottom, and I never felt that I was so close to the sky. Then, with a short time walking, I got to the lookout at Mt John. I was shocked by the landscape I saw from all angles. I saw the big cloud projecting its shadow on the endless farmland; I saw the whole lake with its turquoise colour; I even saw the raining cloud far away; the town centre was so small below, and the cold wind from the continuous snow mountain was blown all my exhaustion away. I felt I got all my energy back from the things I experienced at the top of the mountain. But that was the start of my following tragic journey. Because I felt so good and I did not think about going back, I kept walking forward even though I did not see other people walking in the same direction. The walking track seemed flat, but it was still not easy to walk. After walking for a distance, I felt I had walked into farmland. The sheep were walking and eating around the landscape, and their droppings were almost covered every inch of the walking track. The farmland was so vast and looked the same, the only guiding thing was the half-metre high wayfinding poles. Suddenly, the weather was not as sunny as when I was at the top of the mountain. And it just started to hail. At that time, I felt I was walking for a really long time, but I still did not feel I was approaching the downhill track. There were no other people around me, and I could not find the next wayfinding pole. I was so scared that at that moment I thought I would get lost and died there. I felt I cannot stay here anymore, so I ran as fast as I can to the direction I thought was downhill and I even forgot how tired I was. Fortunately, I ran in the right direction and the hail was stopped. After turning a corner, I finally walked on to the other side of the mountain where I could see the town centre. That was really a relief for me. Just at the

moment, I thought the next track would be easy to walk, it destroyed my hope. The path was like a wave. It kept making me go up and down which consume much more energy and made me exhausted. I felt I would walk on it for ages. And the sunny weather made me so thirsty after I had run out of drinking water. I felt I experienced four seasons just by this walk. And the most thing I felt which makes this journey so hard and so long was loneliness. I saw no one on this part of the track. When I finally walked on the foreshore I could not tell in words how I happy I was.

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